

# Star Wars: Spartan Alliance

by 117Jorn

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Summary: The Mando'ade forces, a massive force of Mandalorian's and Clones who oppose the empire, continue their fight. However, when they find themselves at the glassed landscape Harvest, they have found an enemy almost as bad as the Empire. Will be rated M.

## 1. Chapter 1: A new enemy

\*\*Special thanks to Dragonknighthtryu and Patriot-112 on this fic.  
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"Talking"\_  
><strong>\_

"\_Radio\_"

'\_Thinking\_'

Prolog: Discovery

\_\*\*1.5 BBY\*\*\_

\_\*\*Location: Somewhere in Hyperspace\*\*\_

\*\*\_Onboard the \_Keldabe\_-Class Battleship Redemption\_\*\*

"How much longer until we reach the patrol's location?" asked a figure who sat on the Captain's chair of the ship, a man who looked to be in his 20 or 30's stood at 6'3" with short militaristic brown hair, had an odd pair of eyes, the left was jade green with golden flecks while the right was gold with green flecks and had a trio of scars running over the eye. He wore what looked like green/red trimmed Mandalorian Shock-Trooper Armor, only it was worn under a Jedi tunic and cloak that were missing their sleeves revealing his toned muscles and a pair of Beskar armguards.

"It should only be a few more minutes, \_Mand'alor.\_" Said one of the officers on the bride. "The scout fleet said this was something that we had to see with our own eyes, and if Captain Reeves' reputation is anything to go by, it has to be something big."

"I know that." The man, Ryu Hisanaga, also known as 'Mandalore the Redeemer' said. "I trust the Captain's judgment, Ensign. But even I have to be cautious seeing how he said the area we are going into is in Wild Space."

"Well, if his ships managed to get there with no problem, ours shouldn't either." A new voice said, and Ryu turned around to see a beautiful Human Female looking to be about as old as he was, standing at 5'10 with Shoulder length Red hair tied into a pony tail, and violet eyes. She wore form-fitting Mandalorian Shock-Trooper Armor that was white with red trimming with a black shoulder cape (like Boba Fett's). She was armed simply with a single Vibrosword on her back, and a pair of WESTAR-34 Blaster Pistols in their holsters.

"That may be Calista." Ryu said. "But I can't shake the feeling that something's gonna happen. The Force has been acting very strangely ever since I got that transmission from Reeves."

"Ah, we'll be fine, Ryu." Calista Hisanaga said, smiling. "We've got a fleet of our \_Keldabe\_-Class, three \_Venator\_-classes, and Six \_Acclamator\_-classes. Not to mention the \_Dreadnaught\_-class, \_Interceptor\_-class, \_Victory-I \_Class, and the three \_Crusader\_-class ships that Captain Reeves has under his command. I'm sure we can handle whatever it is he found."

Ryu merely raised an eyebrow as he looked at his wife "Hi, I don't believe we've met, I'm Ryu Hisanaga, Murphy's Bitch." He said with sarcastic cheerfulness "Think about it Cast, knowing our luck we're about to come across some genocidal alien race that makes the Empire's tactics look like child's play."

"Way to jinx the whole fleet, Master." A third voice said, this one coming from another female looking a bit younger than the other two, with shoulder length rust red hair that framed hard gray eyes, and wore a nondescript sleeveless tunic and pants but had put an violet colored armored vest over top completing the outfit was a pair of fingerless gloves and a single hilt like object at her waist.

"Ya, ya." Ryu said, waving it off. "Anyways, anything new from base since we left Scout?"

Scout nodded. "I got word that Jade and Trip's fleet just got back from their coordinated attack with the Rebels against the Imperial research lab's on Fresia." She said. "The Reb's hijacked a bunch of those Prototype X-Wing Starfighters, and are likely gonna begin Mass Production of them soon. Jade managed to get a few spec's for ourselves, along with an extra X-Wing the Rebel's left behind."

"And Casualties?" Ryu asked.

"Other than a few bomber's getting show down, and some wounded on the ground, casualties were light on both our side and the Rebel's." Scout said before grinning. "But if you're talking about the Empire's

losses...let's just say there is no base now."

Ryu just shook his head, chuckling lightly. "Should have guessed that would happen." He commented. "Then again, they aren't the Hades Corp for nothing."

"Right, anyways after being sure they lost the Imperial's, they recently made it back to our base at Lehon." Scout continued. "They got word that we launched to see what the Captain discovered, and offered that if we need any help, they'll be on stand-by on the Hyperspace Route, ready to jump with their fleet."

"Well, It's nice to see they care." Calista said. "Though I doubt we're gonna need 'em."

"You never know, Cast." Ryu said. "But, its good to have some back-up regardless."

"Sir, we're about to drop out of hyperspace." The Ensign said.

"Ah, finally." Ryu said. "Once we exit hyperspace locate the Captain's forces. And Scout, send a message to the Hades Corps saying we'll contact them if we need help." Scout nodded as she moved to the communications station to send the message.

"Exiting Hyperspace in 3...2...1...now." The ensign said, and soon the \_Keldabe-\_Class Battleship, along with Three \_Venator-\_Class Star Destroyers, and six \_Acclamator-\_Class Assault Ships dropped out of hyperspace, and before them appeared a Planet...A planet that looked like it's seen better days.

"What in the hell?" Ryu shouted as he bolted up from his seat at the sight, eyes wide as were Calista's, Scout's, and the rest of the crews of the 10 ships of the Mandalore's fleet. The Planet's surface...it looked as if it was burning. It looked as if 2/3rds of the Planet was on fire, burning with clouds of fire, and the ocean's burned dry. What little of the Planet that didn't look burnt were the 1/3rd of the Planet that looked covered in ice. In orbit of the planet looked to be the ruined hulks of hundreds of ships, some looking to be made one way, while fewer looked much more...  
\_Alien.\_

"What...what the hell happened here?" Ryu muttered, not believing his eyes. He had seen many war-torn planets, but he has never seen such destruction like \_this\_.

"A-According to scans sir..." Said the officer at the sensors. "It would...be most likely that a large number of ships bombarded the planet from orbit with weapons rivaling the power behind Nuclear Weaponry...and it looks like they did it to most of the Planet. The Ice is the result of a Nuclear Winter effect after the bombardment."

"Sir, I have visual on Reeve's fleet." The Ensign said. "Their just outside of the Debris Field." Ryu looked, and sure enough, a small fleet of 6 ships, one Victory I-Class Star Destroyer, one Interceptor-Class Frigate, one Dreadnaught-Class heavy cruiser, and three Crusader-Class Corvettes were in a standard holding pattern.

"Receiving a transmission from Captain Reeves' ship the \_Indomitable.\_" The ensign said. "Patching it through." In front of the Mandalore, his wife and apprentice, the holographic image of a young male with brown hair and eyes, and wearing an old Republic captain uniform.

\_"Mand'alore, It's good to see you made it."\_ Captain Tacjo Reeves said. \_"Can you see why I needed you to see this yourself?"\_

"Yes...I have." Ryu said calmly. "What happened here?"

\_"Well, we sent some team's into the destroyed ships in the debris field, and we already sent in a small force to the ground."\_ Reeves said before sighing. \_"I think it may be best if we discussed this face-to-face Mand'alore sir."\_

"I agree." Ryu said. "I'll head over too the \_Indomitable\_now. See you soon, Captain. But, I must ask, do you have any clue as to the name of this Planet?"

The Captain nodded. \_"From what we've gathered from the ship's memory banks thus far, which is very little by the way, we believe the Planet was called...Harvest by the natives, sir."\_

Ryu nodded. "Alright, be with you in a minute." he said before giving the respective Mandalorian salute, which the Captain returned before his image dissipated.

Ryu then turned too his two friends. "Calista, Scout, you're with me." he said, and they nodded as they left the bridge, and headed for the hanger.

\_\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_\_

\_\_\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\_\_

\_\_\*\*UNSC Phoenix-Class Colony Ship: Spirit of fire  
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\_\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_\_

"Captain, wake up. Something has happened."

Hesitantly, Captain James Cutter forced his eyes open. Overwhelming light stabbed into his aging eyes and he was sure tears would form under his gray eyebrows. His cryo-pod cracked open with a hiss, the burning sensation over his covered torso nearly crippling him. He failed to maintain his balance and he dropped to the grated floor. Heaving a chilling breath, he exhaled with a hacking cough, racking his body with even more pain.

His mind tried to catch up with his present state. The Captain had been quick-thawed only once before, and he knew the only reason for such a risky procedure was dire circumstances. And if they were indeed dire, then as captain of the \_Spirit of Fire\_, he was needed to be fully functional.

He rolled onto his rear and cleared the moisture from his face with a brush of his hand. He shielded his eyes till they were partially

adjusted to the Cryo Room's overhead glowpanels. He coughed a few more times before looking up at a small pedestal stationed at the very end of the chamber. James was expecting to see the glowing avatar of Serina, the ship's on board AI, but the pedestal remained dark.

Nevertheless, Serina's voice echoed through the speaker system. "Captain, I need you on the bridge."

James frowned to himself. \_Since when did I take orders from an AI?\_ He shook the mildly amusing thought from his mind and lifted himself up off the floor, clutching his own pod for balance. "Give me a minute." He let a quick dizziness spell evaporate before his eyes and started for the exit. James found his locker and quickly got dressed. It would be highly improper for a UNSC Captain to go strutting around the deck wearing nothing more than a body suit.

Placing his trusty cap on his head, James paused in front of the locker's small mirror. His mind was racing with random thoughts, even distracting so-called priorities of dressing one's self, and his gut began to grow cold with worry that any more delay could ultimately effect the \_Spirit of Fire\_ in the most negative way. He nodded to his reflection and slammed the door shut.

James exited the Cryo Room, taking note that there were no other crew members up and about, and walked down the short foyer that lead to a long hallway. He passed Cryo Rooms Two and One, and he stopped short when he noticed the empty lockers outnumbering the occupied ones, situated along the wall. James sighed as he placed a hand over an opened locker door and shut it quietly. On its exterior, the paint had been chipped and scarred from too many times when the owner had hurried off to battle. The worn identifying label was still attached: Pvt. Gregory Aiken. Cutter didn't recognize the name, and he wondered at what point the marine had sacrificed his life in service to the UNSC\_. Was it on Arcadia, or possibly on that God-forsaken shield world? \_

He didn't have the answer, but the memories of those engagements were still vividly entrenched in his mind. His priorities since taking back Harvest had changed suddenly and drastically after discovering the Covenant had found and unlocked an ancient star map deep inside the polar regions. Professor Ellen Anders was able to access the map, albeit briefly, and it led them to Arcadia, the doctor's own homeworld. Cutter pivoted on his right foot and leaned back against the locker's cool metal surface\_. When we got there, the Covies were just slaughtering innocent civilians\_. He felt his hands tighten into fists so he forced them open. \_We saved as many as we could that day\_.

The Covenant had found something of importance on Arcadia, and after a long battle, Anders and Sgt. John Forge were able to search the devastated area for clues of the enemy's plans. \_Only Anders was captured and we had to follow her transponder. A security breach like that could have ended the war right then and there\_. But what Cutter or Serina couldn't anticipate was arriving at an uncharted system. \_Only it wasn't just another transit stop, but a shell of a world. A shield world, if you will\_. There they not only encountered a Covenant presence but a new lifeform Serina had classified as parasitic in nature. \_Had Private Aiken succumbed to the ill affects of this infection? \_Sadly, James knew that of all the possible ways

to die on the battlefield, that would have been the worst.

Following Anders' signal brought them to the inside of the planetoid where the \_Spirit of Fire\_ clashed briefly with the Covenant ship that led them there. Taking a lot of damage, they were able to achieve some hasty field repairs before clearing the engagement. Miraculously, Professor Anders had escaped her captivity and Sgt. Forge helped her get back to the ship. While he was able to lead the ground forces in establishing a beachhead on the surface, Anders relayed her findings that the Covenant had unlocked an ancient armada of highly advanced ships and were planning to instigate them into their own fleet.

James pushed himself off the locker and started walking again. He wondered why he didn't dream of any of this while in cryo sleep, but he figured it was for the best. Without Sgt. Forge's sacrifice of personally detonating the \_Spirit of Fire\_'s FTL drive at the shield world's core, the Covenant could have wiped Humanity off the galactic map in a matter of years with that technology. \_Sacrifice\_, James thought to himself. \_If there were one word that could sum up the actions of the brave men and women who have fought with the \_Spirit of Fire\_, it would be sacrifice\_. Pursing his lips, he shook his head and tried to reorient to his current situation. \_Get your mind right, Cutter\_.

His brisk amble down the empty corridors was short lived when he turned it into a flat out sprint. Slightly annoyed at Serina's vague "something has happened" statement, his mind wanted to fill the void with his own speculations. \_Could we have reached a UNSC outpost already? Did something go wrong in Medical? Have one of the Cryo Rooms malfunctioned?\_ Either way, he would know soon enough.

The bridge door hissed open just as James Cutter stomped his pace down to a fast walk. Catching his breath took longer than he had expected, but he did breathe a deep sigh of relief at seeing Serina's holoform glowing at the central tactical display. He knew she was coming up on the end of her expected lifespan, but as for now, she appeared her usual, bland self. "Serina, status."

She pivoted in place, turning to face him. "Sir, are you alright?"

"Just a little winded," he said, finally able to get his breathing under control as he chewed on the inside of his cheek. "How long has it been since our departure?"

"15 Years, two Months, five days." The Captain gave the Shipboard A.I an unbelieving look. "Over 15 Years?" He asked for confirmation, and the A.I nodded. "Yes sir...and your not going to believe where we are. According to scans...we are just a short distance away from Harvest."

The Captain slumped down into his captain's chair. "Harvest...where it all began..." he muttered.

"But that's not the strange part." Serina continued. "When I made a scan for any UNSC signals, though I found none...I just discovered a fleet of unknown ships over the planet."

"Covenant?" The captain said, instantly going into captain mode.

"No sir," the A.I reassured. "I am counting exactly 16 ships over the planet, none of which seem to be made out of the same material any known Covenant ship has been made out of. Their sizes range from around a few hundred Meters, up to ships almost as large as a Covenant CCS-Class Battlecruiser."

"Have they detected us yet?" The Captain asked.

"No, they have not taken any actions which suggest they have, sir." Serina said. "And I just detected a small ship launching to what I guess is the flagship of the fleet, and is moving towards one of the smaller dagger-shaped ships." She then displayed the fleet on the forward view screen, and sure enough, a single shuttle-sized ship departed from the largest of the ships, and was heading towards one of the smaller dagger-shaped ships, the one with two 'domes' on top of what the captain made the guess was the ship's bridge.

"What should we do sir?" Serina asked. The captain thought about his options. The \_Spirit of fire \_was not made for ship-to-ship interceptions, despite being armed with the weapons to do so for defensive purposes. She was a support ship for all intents and purposes despite them being a bit larger than most of the ships. James was not about to endanger the lives of his crew after everything they've been through.

"We'll keep our eye on them for now." The captain said, as he narrowed his eyes. "Have Cryo Rooms One, Two, and Four queue for a quick thaw. And wake the Professor and Red Team. We might need their help on this one."

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\_\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\_

\_\*\*Planet: Harvest \*\*\_

\_\*\*Surface \*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

Clone Commander CC-0317, better known as 'Zack' by his friends watched as he stood in the middle of the recently discovered base they uncovered. He was wearing White/Yellow trimmed Mandalorian Shock Trooper armor, and was armed with a DC-15S Blaster, and a pair of DC-17 hand blasters.

The base they found seemed old, and very run down. But thanks too their engineers they managed to bring back some life into the old base, turning on the power generators and getting some lights turned on. Currently there was a grand total of 1,145 Soldiers, most were Mandalorians, Former Republic Clones, or some of the newer clone's that the Kaminonian's who escaped from Kamino created after siding with them.

Zack was one of the Clone's who fought in the Clone Wars nearly 16 years ago. He was trained to fight for the Republic, as were his men. However when Order 66 was issued out, he was hesitant to follow this order, feeling a 'sixth sense' you could call it. This was further

proven when Chancellor Palpatine reorganized the Republic into the first Galactic Empire. Zack afterwards managed to convince his men that their loyalties lied with the Republic, not the Empire. Since that day, they at first worked at the Skirata settlement in Kyrimorut on Mandalore, however when the Empire invaded Mandalore, the Kyrimorut Clones, Mandalorians, and even Jedi Refugee's were forced to flee again. This time, however, when they fled they found themselves evacuating with the infamous Mandalorian PMC Ne'tra Kad (Black Sword), as well as the 247th 'Hades' Mobile Assault Corps who also defected like they did. They eventually found themselves at the long-forgotten world of Lehon, where they made a new home there, and have been fighting the Empire ever since.

Now, he found himself and the men now under his command, seeing what was in the abandoned base with the technicians have confirmed to be formerly called 'Alpha Base' by its previous owners.

"Commander Zack!" Zack turned around to see one of the Clone Engineers sent to inspect the base for any armories or such running up to him. The Engineer was wearing Phase-I Clone armor, instead of the Phase-II. The reason why was because the Phase-II armor series was far too much like the current Stormtrooper armor that the Imperial Forces use now. So in order to keep confusion to a low, many Clone Troopers who defected switched to using either A) Phase-I Series Clone Armor. Or B) Mandalorian Shock Trooper armor. However the new Phase-I armor had all of the abilities the Phase-II armor had, only in order to further differentiate from the original Phase-I, the new Phase-I armor, or as it is being called by the Clones as Phase-III armor, it had built-in energy shields that can withstand a limited amount of blaster fire \*\*(AN: Its pretty much like KOTOR Personal Energy Shields)\*\*, Most Phase-III armor were colored steel gray by default instead of pure white, however there is still the Command color system (Green=Sergeant, Blue=Lieutenant, Red=Captain, Yellow=Commander), the different armor and colors definitely help separate Stormtroopers, from New Clone Troopers.

"Yes, what is it Sparks?" Zack asked the Engineer. The Engineer, 'Sparks' stopped in front of him. "My team managed to uncover what we think is the armory of the base." he reported. "It's loaded with weapons sir."

"And?" Zack said, wanting him to continue. "What kind of weapons are we talking about?"

"Slugthrowers, sir." Sparks said, and the Clone Commander gave him a disbelieving look. "But...their not like any Slugthrowers I, or anyone from the team has ever seen before."

"What do you mean?" Zack asked. "Well sir, these new Slugthrowers seem to be built not to just spray ammo everywhere, but their are also different ammo variants from what we've uncovered, and they pack quite a punch. Way better than any Slugger from home. Some of us managed to test-fire a few of them in what we guessed was a firing range, and from our test-firing, we all came to the same conclusion." he grinned in his helmet. "If we had to pick any Slugthrower in the galaxy to fight the empire, we'd definitely stick with one of the ones found here."

"Impressive." Zack said. "Be sure to grab a few when we return too

the \_Indomitable\_. I also just got word that Mandalore's personal fleet just arrived in system."

"Seriously?" Sparks said, surprised. "Mandalore the Redeemer's here?"

"Yes, he is." Zack said, but before their conversation could continue, another Clone arrived. "Sir, we...may have a problem." he said. "CT-0421's Patrol party never called back in after they went out on a Scouting mission."

"How long has it been since their last transmission?" Zack said, worried for his fellow Clones.

"thirty minutes, sir." The Clone said. "He was suppose to check in 15 intervals."

"Alright, then." Zack said, going into full commander mode. "Send in a search party for 'em. Take a few Speeder Bike teams and search for 'em in the area they were sent to scout. Also, make sure our defensive are at 100% still...I got a bad feeling about this."

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\_\*\*Just Outside the base\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

Just outside of the base's perimeter, on the ledge of a small hill, a pair of shadowy figures watched as the unknown figures secured and restored life to the old human base.

"Are they Humans?" Asked one of the figures, an Alien standing at 8'4 with an odd head with four separate mandibles attached to its face, and massive fingers and feet. He wore an Alien Blue armor.

"Yes, definitely Human's." said another alien of the same species, only wearing Red armor. "Filth...What are they doing back here?"

"Maybe they wish to reclaim this Planet once again?" The Blue Alien said.

"Maybe...but why is their armor different?" The Red alien said. "It looks nothing like their 'Marine' body suits...and looks more similar too the armor those accursed Demon's wore, but smaller. But they are definitely not Demons..."

"How shall we proceed?" The Blue alien asked. "Our ambush party that attacked their patrol are almost done."

"Alert the Fleetmaster of the new enemy fleet over the Planet, and we shall prepare to attack their base." The Red one said as he and the blue one stood up. "This time, we will forever cast these filthy vermin off of this planet...in the name of the Holy Covenant, and of the Forerunners."

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\_\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\_

\_\*\*UNSC Spirit of Fire\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

Professor Ellen Anders wiped the last lingering bit of tiredness from her eyes and straightened up when the lift doors chimed open. She walked into the small personnel lift and pressed the button for the Bridge, closing the doors.

Once she was released from her cryo-pod, Anders had raced to her lab down on the observation deck only to find most of her equipment on a hard restart. She knew her things were safe from other crewmembers meddling with the delicate artifacts, but it didn't rule out Serina poking her head in and turning off Ellen's computer gear. She had silently cursed the AI, knowing full well that Serina would just as soon wipe all of Ellen's recent findings just to spite her, let alone use some rant about shutting off the power to unused decks as justification.

The doors chime again, this time opening up to a fully lit corridor and other crewmembers in a state of self-collection. Anders let a smile tug at the corner of her mouth. She had always prided herself in combating the ill effects of cryo-sleep. She was even able to adapt her own cryo-pod to apply a thin layer of specialized coating to limit the itchiness and discomfort prone to one who wore clothing during the flash-freezing. It most likely was illegal to tamper with UNSC surplus, but the Captain had never voiced his concerns to her.

She moved quickly now, abandoning her hold on her white lab coat, and started for the bridge. She kept her pace somewhere between a trot and a fast walk. It wouldn't do her any good to look foolish in front of others, for that matter. The crisp sound of synced footsteps turned her head partway around.

"Excuse us, Ma'am."

It was the trio of Spartans that marched past, and Ellen mentally kicked herself for not picking up on their orderly gait. They, unlike every other person— save her, appeared fully functional and walked with a purpose. She reckoned they were headed for the bridge as well, providing her with a little more data on the current chain of command. \_Forge\_ was \_the leader on the ground, but now\_. . . Ellen frowned at her recollection. \_That damn sergeant had to go be a hero and save us all\_. She let out a sigh. \_Just when I was starting to like him\_. Well, if the Spartans were going to head up an assault team, it was fine with her. They had definitely proven themselves time and time again on that shield world.

Up ahead, the bridge doors hissed opened for the three soldiers, the two in back judging the distance so as to clear the doorway with a centimeter to spare on either side. Anders quickened her pace, hoping to make it through the door while it was still ajar.

\_Nope\_. It slammed shut and she took a sudden sidestep to avoid activating the sensor to open the door. She was sure the Captain was already filling the Spartans in on what Serina deemed important, but

she needed to make her own entrance. Not in an arrogant way, Ellen explained to herself, just so everyone on the bridge knows that I'm as important as the next person. She cringed at her own semi-delusional thoughts and entered the bridge.

And was greeted by the most annoying sound she'd heard since her youth when she was pulled to a local dive and forced to listen to the stuff they called music. But unlike the rhythmic pulse of long ago, the static blaring over the bridge's speaker system seemed almost mathematical, binary. She saw Captain Cutter wave her over towards the tactical display, and noticed that the three Spartans huddled on the nearest edge were studying the display before them. Serina stood on her pedestal, lifted chin and all, and smiled as the Professor took the only available spot around the tactical display.

The static cut off and James Cutter nodded to Anders. "Good to see you're not suffering too badly." His right eyebrow arched up. "Though I didn't expect you to take that long to get here."

Ellen pursed her lips. "I wanted to stop by my lab," she said, mechanically rotating her head to stare at Serina. "But someone already beat me there." She was pleased to see Serina frown, though briefly, and the AI opened her mouth to speak. But Anders cut off any side comment. "It doesn't matter. My equipment needs to have diagnostics run on them anyway." She pointed to the holoforn before them. "What's this?"

"This, is Harvest." Serina said, shocking Ellen. "Exactly as we left it 15 years ago. Still mostly glass besides the parts covered in Post-Nuclear winter, and the debris field of UNSC and Covenant ships still orbiting the planet. The only difference now...is that fleet of 16 Unidentified ships in orbit. They match no Covenant or UNSC construction patterns."

Anders looked at the fleet of ships on the display. Just by looking at them, she could already make an accurate guess that they were Warships of some kind due to most of them having a Dagger-shaped hull's with the exception of a few of the smaller ships. "What do we know about them so far?" she asked.

"Virtually, nothing." Serina said. "We're too far for me to attempt a hack against their systems, and we don't know how far exactly their sensor range goes. As far as we know, it could either be just a few meters ahead of us, it could be very short ranged, or we're already in sensor range and their just ignoring us."

"And I don't want to disrupt a very possible first contact scenario with an attack on their Computers...wouldn't be the most...kind way of saying hello." James said.

"Yes, we definitely don't want to be like the Covenant on this" Serina said. "I find it ironic that we may be making First Contact at the sight of the very first time we made Contact with the Covenant."

"Let's hope this time things work out a bit better for us." Anders said and the Captain and Serina nodded. And although they didn't show it, the three Spartan's also silently agreed.

However, Serina's head then jerked up. "Captain...I just picked up

Slipspace Ruptures just inside our sensor range!" She shouted, tensing the whole bridge crew.

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\_\*\*A few minutes before\*\*\_

\_\*\*Mandao'ade Victory I-class Star Destroyer  
\*\*\_\*\*Indomitable\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

Ryu, Scout and Calista entered the bridge of the Indomitable, where they met up with Captain Reeves in person. "Captain Reeves." Ryu said as he nodded, and the Captain nodded back. "Mand'alore." he replied just before getting to business. "Alright, let me bring you up to speed sir. When we first arrived in system, as you could guess, our reactions were the same as your own. However after getting over the shock, and messaging you, I immediately began sending in teams too salvage whatever we could from the surface and the debris belt, and hopefully find out whatever we could about what the hell happened here."

"First, we collected the data from the more bulky ships in the field." The Captain Continued as they walked up to a Holo-projector. "Most of the Data on the ships were corrupt or deleted, we assume the crew emptied most of their ship's Navigational Data when they were destroyed to prevent their enemies, whoever they were, from discovering the locations too their planets. However we were still able to collect small bits of information we pieced together."

"And?" Ryu asked, gesturing him to continue.

"Apparently, the first set of ships were from something called the United Nations Space Command, or UNSC." The Captain said. "Their ships and equipment are mostly advance Slugthrowers, and from what we've gathered on their weapons, they use Slugthrowers called Magnetic Accelerator Cannons, or MAC gun's as their ship's primary weapons, which fire a 3,000-ton slug at point four-tenths the speed of light, around 120,000 kilometers per second."

Ryu let out a low whistle. "That's not something to laugh at." he commented. "For a Slugthrower that is."

"Said the same thing." The Captain said. "Anyways, from what we gathered, these ships were fighting an alien race known as...the Covenant. These were the guys who did that." he pointed at the War-torn planet. "From the bits of information we gathered, after a Scouting fleet was near completely destroyed, they launched a massive counter-attack against the Covenant ships in orbit. They had the Covenant outnumbered 3/1, but they still received heavy losses losing 2/3rds of their attack force to just the one ship the Covenant had stationed here."

"One ship did all of this?" Calista asked, indicating the whole debris field.

"Most of it, yes." Reeves said before sighing. "The only reason why is because this Covenant had the upper hand in technology, seeing how

the Human's of the UNSC have yet to develop Shields for their ships, laser-based weaponry \_or\_ \_Repulsorlift tech. While the Covenant had all that and more."

"How long do you think it's been since this battle took place?" Ryu asked, his eyes not turning away from the debris field.

"We can only guess sir." The captain said. "But if I were to guess...I'd put it around being a Decade ago."

They were about to continue, but not before one of the Sensor officers called out "Sir! I'm picking up some strange readings on the sensors!" He said.

"What is it?" the captain asked.

"Its...I don't know how to explain it sir, but it's as if theirs a rupture in space." the Sensors operator reported. "Its as if...wait...INCOMING VESSELS AT SIERRA-SIX-TWO-ZERO!"

"WHAT!" Ryu shouted. "Where the hell did they come from?"

"From the rupture sir! They just appeared out of nowhere!" The Sensors officer said. "But whoever they are, the material their made out of matches that of the material of the Covenant ships sir! I'm Counting a total of eight ships!"

Ryu looked at the display of the likely soon-to-be enemy fleet. "Have you tried hailing them?" he asked.

"Yes, but no response Mand'alore." The Communications officer said. "wait...I have something. Audio only."

Ryu nodded for him to continue, and he pressed a series of buttons. Then, an alien voice echoed through the speakers: "Your destruction, is the will of the Gods!" it said. "And We are their instrument!"

"Well, that doesn't sound too good." Ryu said calmly before entering 'Mandalore Mode'. "Red alert to all ships! Raise shields and prep the Turbolaser batteries! All fighters are cleared for launch, and get the fleet into combat formation Alpha-Beta-Three!"

All of the bridge crew responded instantly, and began carrying out their orders. "Captain Reeves, we must return to the \_Redemption.\_" Ryu said as he faced the Captain. "It will be easier to command the fleet there. And I think we should call in that support Jade and Trips offered us."

Captain Reeves nodded just as one of the officers spoke up. "Sir, the largest of the Covenant Vessels just launched a wave of ships, bearing down towards the surface!" he reported. "Their about as big as LAAT/i dropships, so I suppose that's what they are! Their heading towards an area not to far from where we landed out own forces! I'm counting twenty in total!"

"Then send word to the Commander down there!" Reeves shouted as Ryu, Scout and Calista left the bridge. "Tell him to expect some hard contacts, and soon!"

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\_\*\*Planet: Harvest \*\*\_

\_\*\*Surface \*\*\_

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Zack was no Jedi, but he could feel something was wrong. Neither the original Scouting party, or the Search Party had come back yet, and were long overdue. Just in case, he put the base up to yellow alert, the men were on their toes, and the automated defenses they set up were primed and ready.

\_"...Commander Zack, this is Adviser 44125. Do you copy?"\_ Zack's radio turned on, receiving the voice from their Adviser from the \_Indomitable\_.

"I copy Adviser, reading you loud an clear." he said.

\_"Good\_" the adviser said \_"But I have some bad news for you. A few minutes ago, a fleet of unidentified warships just entered in system, and their armor material matched that of the remains of Covenant warships we found. They just launched a wave of supposed Dropships heading your way\_".

"Sith Spit!" Zack cursed. "Alright, we'll get ready."

\_"Roger that, we'll send in reinforcements as soon as we can."\_ Adviser said before signing off.

"Alright people, listen up!" he shouted on the radio. "We have incoming! Looks like the people who blasted this planet are back, and they ain't too happy about us being here, and are sending in a force right now! Everyone get to your defensive positions, and prepare for some hard contact!"

All of the Clone Troopers all gave their confirmations, and ran to their positions. \_'Just when thing's were looking bad, they got a whole lot worse...'\_ Zack thought before his Commlink activated again. \_"Commander, I'm picking up some allied IFF's heading towards the base."\_ came the voice of one of the Base's sniper team's. \_"Confirmed to be all five members of the Search Party, and two of the five from the original scouting party including Commander Keto."\_

Zack sighed in relief, finally some \_good \_news. "Alright, open the front gate!" he said, and no sooner after he said it the front gate opened, and shortly after seven figures riding five 74-Z Speeder bikes, and two BARC speeders.

On one of the BARC Speeders was a young woman looking to be in her late twenties, she had short Black hair, blue eyes, and was wearing an arctic variant of Mandalorian Shock trooper armor that hugged her figure, married too some Jedi robes. On her hips she had a pair of two cylindrical objects.

"Miss Keto, it's good to see you made it back in one piece." Zack said as he walked up towards the woman, Jedi Knight Serra Keto.

Serra gave a ghost of a smile at Zack. "Yes...good to see you too." She said grimly.

"What happened to the rest of-"

"Dead." Serra cut him off, surprising him. "We were ambushed by a group of unknown alien beings...they looked like nothing I have ever seen in my entire life. There were little small ones, bird-like ones, and a few that stood at least eight feet tall and had weird faces. They attacked so suddenly, only me and CT-1435 made it out alive...we'd probably be dead if you hadn't sent that rescue party."

"No thanks required Ma'am." Zack said. "But we think the same aliens who attacked you are making their way here, and our fleet upstairs is about to engage the enemy fleet."

Serra cursed at that, "Are the defenses up and ready?"

"Yes Ma'am, and we also finished salvaging what we could from the armory of this base. And let's just say for Slugthrowers, they really get the job done," Zack confirmed.

"Must really be something if your complementing them, Zack." Serra said with a smile.

Before their conversation could continue, however "\_Sir! I have eyes on inbound enemy ships making a run on the base!\_" Shouted one of the Advance Recon Force Trooper's on the Radio from whatever position they were stationed at. "\_Fifteen of them landed by those weird structures a few clicks away, but five others are moving against the base!\_"

"Thanks, Bucks." Zack said. "Keep your eyes on that other force." He then turned on the public Comm. "Incoming Dropships! AT-TE's, bring 'em down!"

The Regiment's four AT-TE Walkers all complied, as their Mass Driver Cannons rose up. As well as the base's salvaged 75mm AA guns, and .50 Cal Auto-cannons also came alive after over 15 years, and aimed at the skies.

From the skies descended the five Covenant Dropships. Three bulky-looking ones, and two U-Shaped ones with thanks to the base's computers, identified them as Type-52 'Phantom' Troop Carriers, and Type-25 'Spirit' Troop Carriers respectively.

"Open up!" Zack shouted, and the base defenses and the AT-TE's unleashed a massive barrage of weapons fire against the Covenant strike force.

Though the Dropships managed to weave through the .50 cal, and 75mm rounds, or just shrugged them off, however three of the AT-TE's cannon's managed to score hits, and in three shots, three Dropship's transformed into balls of fire.

The two last Dropships, one Phantom and one Spirit, decide not to land inside the base, but rather just outside of it. Both dropship's dropped their loads of troops, along with two Type-26 'Wraith'

Assault Gun Carriage's.

When Zack saw the Covenant Species with his own eyes, he could honestly say they were unlike anything they had previously encountered. They looked far more animal-like than most other species in the galaxy are, from the short 'Grunt's', to the bird-like Jackals, and the tall Elite's as the UNSC seemed to identify them.

The Covenant attacked with the Grunt's taking the lead, firing Plasma Pistols and Needlers at their defenses. "Take 'em down!" Zack shouted, and the Clone Troopers on the top of the base armed with Z-6 rotary blaster cannons, PLX-1 missile launchers, rose up and opened fire against the covenant. The DC-15's and Z-6's tore right through the Grunt's in just a few seconds, and the Jackals following were caught by surprise as the Human's weapons managed to damage their shields, causing them to overload and deactivating leaving them vulnerable to attack as they were torn apart shortly after.

The Wraith's managed to fire their Plasma Motors a few times at the base, however they were quickly silenced by two missiles each, causing their Repulsorlift's to fail, and fall to the ground shortly after exploding.

The Elites fired their own Plasma Rifles and Repeaters up against the human's who use weapons unlike anything they've ever seen, but with the fire coming from the base, they were forced to take cover behind the remains of the Wraith Tanks firing from cover.

"Keep the pressure on 'em!" Zack shouted as he too drew his own DC-15A and began firing at the aliens.

"Sir, the other enemy force just finished deployment over here, and are heading your way." Bucks said on the radio. "I'm counting a little over 100 troops of different species. Be advised, I'm seeing two pairs of those big aliens, I think their called 'Hunter's' so be careful. I'm also picking up more Dropships with Vehicles and Troops inbound." \_

"Right! Everyone, get ready!" Zack shouted. "Enemy Re-enforcements inbound! I want AT-TE's and Saber Fighter-Tanks at the gate!"

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\_\*\*In Orbit of Harvest\*\*\_

\_\*\*Mando'ade \*\*\_\*\*Kedabe-\*\*\_\*\*Class Battleship  
\*\*\_\*\*Redemption\*\*

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Ryu and the others had just entered the bridge of the Redemption. "Anything new?" he asked as he walked in.

"Enemy fleet is still in holding pattern." The First Officer said. "From the data given to us from the Indomitable, we've confirmed the enemy fleet consists of one CAS-Class Assault Carrier, two CCS-Class Battlecruisers, four SDV-Class Heavy Corvette's, and one CVP-Class Destroyer."

"I'll admit, they like to build their ships big...that assault carrier is about as big as the Malevolence was back in the Clone War's." Calista commented. "You think their trying to compensate for something?"

Ryu smirked a bit at that. "Try to contact them one more time." he said, much to the surprise of much of the bridge crew. "I want to actually speak to the commander of this fleet...I want to find out why they did this if at all possible."

"Um...yes sir, Hailing now." said the Communications officer.

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\_\*\*Covenant CAS-Class Assault Carrier \*\*\_\*\*Purity of Faith\*\*

\_\*\*Main Bridge\*\*\_

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The Elite Shipmaster Rtos' Rakaee, wearing the Golden elite armor watched in curiosity at the Unknown human fleet. He asked the crew to look for these ships for any matches in the 'United Nations Space Command' forces, but no matches were found.

"Shipmaster, the human fleet is attempting to hail us again." One of the Elite minor's on the controls reported.

"Again? Curious that they are attempting to contact us." Rtos said. He then turned his head around. "What say you, Commander?"

The Shipmaster was addressing the single Elite who wore White/Black Elite armor, signifying he was one of the Special Operations Elites onboard the ship. One could see he had seen many battles with the scratches and dents on his armor.

The Elite, Special Operations Commander Neos' Tumae, scratched his lower mandible jaws with his hand. "Why don't we...humor them?" he offered. "The Human's have not tried to contact the Covenant for quite some time in such a direct manor. Perhaps we should see the faces of the ones we are about to defeat?"

Rtos nodded in agreement. "Well, why not?" he said as he turned back. "Open the channel, and put the transmission on the front screen."

The crew of the ship obeyed his orders and everyone paused as instead of an older male of the species wearing a uniform, instead they saw a younger scarred male wearing green/red armor under a robe with a pair of thing gauntlets and odd eyes they had never seen amongst humans before. "Thank you for finally answering my request," The male said as the link opened, his voice seemed neutral "I am Ryu Hisanaga, Mandalore of the Mando'ade, I would like to know why you are attacking us."

There was some quiet muttering at the man's declaration and his allegiance, Rtos merely snorted however "Humans are a plague in the universe no matter where they are from," He declared with contempt

"The Gods and Prophets have declared your immediate eradication."

Ryu's eyes narrowed at he analyzed the Alien leader before sighing "You really are an idiot aren't you?" Ryu asked skeptically his voice beginning to turn dangerous "We have done nothing to earn any sort of retaliation, in fact, we just arrived in this system on an exploratory mission, so will you sit down to peace talks, or will I have to shove something up your ass to dislodge the stick stuck in it?"

Many of the Elites were shocked that a \_human \_would have the nerve to directly insult their Shipmaster, while secretly Neos was supressing a grin \_'I like this Human.'\_ he thought to himself. \_'It's about time someone put the Shipmaster in his place.'\_

Rtos growled in fury. "You Dare insult me you insignificant worm?" He barked. "I could easily launch a wave of Plasma Torpedoe's and be done with you! You should feel \_honored \_that I gave you a chance to speak to me, Rtos 'Rakaee! Shipmaster of the Covenant Assault Carrier \_Purity of Faith \_From the Fleet of Inner Solitude!"

"Action's speak louder than words, \_shipmaster.\_" Ryu said. "Your arrogance will blind you in this battle. You just single-handedly declared war upon not just upon the Mando'ade, but the whole Independent System Allied Forces, and neither me, nor my people will hold back against your men. See you again soon, \_Chakaar.\_" And immidiatly afterwards, Ryu cut the transmission.

Rtos' Rakaee was livid. "ALL SHIPS, FIRE AT WILL AND LAUNCH ALL FIGHTERS!" He roared. "BURN THOSE INSIGNIFICANT VERMIN!"

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\_\*\*Redemption\*\*\_  
  
\_\*\*Bridge\*\*\_  
  
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"Way to piss e'm off, Ryu." Calista said, grimly as their sensors read that they were now charcing all of their ship's weapons.

"Hey, they started it!" Ryu said in his defense. "But right now, let's focus on the task at hand. I want our Venator's, Acclamator's, and the \_Indominatable\_ to focus fire on the CCS-Class Battlecruiser on the left, and the Assault Carrier." He barked. "Mark the second Battlecruiser for bording actions, I want Mandalorian and Clone Marines on that ship ASAP! I want all other ships to focus on the Corvette's! All fighter wings are ordered to intercept their fighters, and all Bombers are to pick their targets, and fire at will!" Ryu then stood up. "Me and the Dragoon's along with another boarding party will board the Assault Carrier, and confront this 'Rtos' asshole personally."

Calista grinned ferrally. "It's about time we got some action!" she said as she and Scout followed him off of the bridge. "Fallern and the other's are gonna be happy today!"

"I know, Calista." Ryu said, a small grin appearing on his own face.  
"It's time for a \_real  
\_battle."

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\_\*\*Meanwhile \*\*\_

\_\*\*UNSC Spirit of fire\*\*\_

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The bridge crew of the Spirit of fire plus Anders and the Spartan's watched in shock as they witnessed the communications between the Covenant and the unknown fleet. The captain risked moving the ship closer in order to get within range for Serina to at least hack into their communications and listen in. To say they were suprised that the unknown fleet were \_human's\_ would be an understatement.

But what The captian though odd was Ryu's decleration of him being "Mandalor of the Mando'ade". He had never heard of any planet called 'Mando'ade' or of a title called 'Mandalore'. And Serina was just as confused as he was.

"Captain, what should we do?" Serina asked.

"Well, their deffinetly no friend of the Covenant." Anders observed.  
"And you know the old saying, the enemy of my enemy, is my friend."

James thought about what to do. As the professor had pointed out, these human's were no friend of the Covenant. Their ships were a lot bigger and seemed to have different weapons than what any known UNSC ship has. But if that transmission was any indication, they had never heard of the Covenant before-hand, and probably knew little to nothing about their tactics.

"...Serina, move towards the Mandalore's fleet." Captain Cutter decided. "Attempt to hail him, and ask if he need any assistance, we are willing an able."

"Aye sir." Serina said before her hologram dissipeared, and the Captain turned to the Spartan's. "I want all three of you ready for combat ASAP." he said. "I don't know what their battle strategy is, but be prepared to aid this 'Mando'ade' in anyway you can if or when you sortie."

"Yes sir." Jerome-092 said. "Red Team will be on stand-by until further notice." and with that, the three Spartan's left the bridge.

"So, any idea who these...'Mando'ade' guys are?" Cutter asked Anders, who just shrugged. "Captian, I am about as clueless as you are right now." she said. "My only theory is that maybe there is a planet out there that had Human life on it much like earth, and that these people are from it." She then turned to look at the soon-to-be battlefield. "I will admit though...this will deffinetly be an interesting battle." She then turned to leave the bridge.

"Where do you think your going?" The captain asked.

"To my lab, to get my recording equipmet warmed up." The Professor said as she reached the door. "One way or another, we need to see how these...Mando'ade fight, and see if we can use their tactics to fight the Covenant."

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\_\*\*Meanwhile \*\*\_

\_\*\*Onboard the Redemption\*\*\_

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A man wearing a set of Red/Black trimmed Mandalorian Shock trooper armor that was mixed with peices of ARC Trooper armor walked quickly down the hallways of the Redemption. His helmet was off, showing of his short black hair, light brown eyes, and lightly scared and tan skin.

"Yo! Rev!" The man turned around to see a pair of other young men heading towards him. One looked to be in his early twenties standing at 5'7, with short, spiked black hair and odd Crimson red eyes, wearing Black/Red trimmed armor. While the other looked to be maybe a year or so older, with similar, longer black hair, but with green eyes. His armor was Black with Blue trimming.

Null-ARC Trooper-1 Revan Skirata smiled. "Hey Jordan, Matthew." He said. "You got the call as well?"

The younger one, Jordan Takeo nodded. "Ya, Ryu called in the whole Dragoon Corp for this op." He said. "He doesn't want to take any chances with these guys."

"Anyways, let's hurry up and get to the armory and get our equipment." Matthew Takeo said, and the others nodded as they quickened their pace towards the armory. When they reached it, they arrived just in time too see four induvidual's exit the armory. Each of them wearing a hybrid suit that was a mix between Mandalorian Shock Trooper armor, and Republic Commando armor. Each of them painted their own color styles with one using Orange trimming, another with Red, one with pale green, and one with Grey/Yellow trimming. They all were equipped with DC-17m's and DC-15s side arm blasters.

"Hey, Boss!" Revan called out, grabbing the former Republic Commando's attention. "have the others already gotten to the hanger already?"

Boss nodded. "Ya, most of them at least." he said. "Fordo's Alpha team left a little while ago, while your team Rev, as well as Fallern and Omega's team should either be there or one their way, so hurry it up."

"Ya, wouldn't wanna be late for the slaughter, would ya now?" Sev said, as he grinned under his shock trooper helmet while Scorch just sighed. "Sev, you worry me sometimes." he said.

"Cut it, Delta's." Fixer said. "We gotta get to the hanger. See you guys soon." With that, Delta squad headed down the hallway, and

towards the hanger.

"Their right, we gotta hurry up and arm up." Jordan said, Revan and Matthew nodded as they entered the Armory and quickly got their own equipment. Jordan took out his usual set up, a DC-15A Blaster Rifle, a pair of DC-17 Hand Blasters, and on his back a classic Double-Bladed Vibrosword next to his Jetpack. Meanwhile Matthew took out a DC-15x Sniper Rifle, plus a LL-30 Blaster Pistol and a Vibro-knife strapped onto his chest. Meanwhile Revan had a bit more simple set-up of just a DC-15S Blaster and a DC-17 Hand Blaster.

"Alright, let's go!" Jordan said as he slid his Pistols into their respective holsters. "We don't want them to leave without us!"

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\_\*\*Redemption Hanger Bay\*\*\_

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Ryu had just entered the hanger bay of the Redemption, where he was already greeted by most of the members of the Dragoon Corps. Including Delta Squad, Kal Skirata and his family (Including Omega Squad, the Null-Arc's, his daughter Ruusaan, and Bardan), Walon Vau, The Alpha ARC's Fordo, Maze and Sull, as well as the Former Jedi Etain Tur-Mukan (Yes, She's alive, it will be explained how later) and Arligan Zey.

Also among them were four specific individuals, who could be considered the 'founders' of the Dragoon Corps besides Himself and Calista.

First, was Sinai Fallern, a man with short salt and pepper colored hair and gray eyes wearing black, silver trimmed, Mandalorian armor and carrying a blaster rifle with obvious modifications to it.

Next, was Valane Trikos, a giant of a man wearing black, red trimmed, mandalorian armor with uncovered biceps and carrying what looked to be a miniaturized artillery piece.

Third, was Alita Riza, a woman with black shoulder length hair and onyx colored eyes wearing formfitting black armor with gold trim and brown cloak thrown over her left shoulder partially covering a jet pack and carrying a blaster pistol, two vibro-blades strapped to her lower back and two satchels full of shape charges.

Then, there was Krista Raez, a woman with brown shoulder length hair and viridian eyes wearing a form fitting sky blue armor with lime green trimming and carrying a blaster rifle with a concussion grenade launcher attached along with a blaster pistol and two vibro-blades attached to her thighs.

Finally, there was Valken Tier, a man who was wearing tan armor with a brown trim with his helmet that he was currently carrying having a small antenna coming out of it, he was also carrying a modified Tusken blaster rifle with a longer than normal scope and a scoped blaster pistol.

"Ah, the Ger'verd finally showed up!" Fallern shouted out, as Ryu playfully glared at him. "Careful Fallern," He said. "I'm Mand'alor now! I could shoot you out an airlock if you piss me off."

"Oh, you'd never do that to Fallern, it's not in your heart." Alita said, with a playful smirk as Ryu just rolled his eyes.

"Whatever, now are we all ready?" Ryu asked.

"Almost, we're waiting for Rev, Jordan and Matthew to show up." Boss said. "We ran into them on the way here, and they were just grabbing their weapons. They should be here right about..." It was then they could see the three said individual's were not sprinting towards the rest of the Dragoon's. "Now."

Revan, Jordan and Matthew finally made it to the others. "Sorry we're late," Revan said. "Had to grab our weapon's on the way here."

"It's fine." Ryu said, waving it off. "You actually made it just in time for the briefing." Ryu then went into commander mode. "Alright, everyone. We're dealing with Unknown Hostiles who have been confirmed as: The Covenant. Don't know who these guys are, but they seem to have some sort of grudge against human's all-together. Our Mission is simple: We are going to board two of their ships." He then pulled out a Holo-Pad, and with a click of a button two of the Covenant ships were displayed. "According to the Data the Indominatable got, they are a CCS-Class Battlecruiser, and a CAS-Class Assault Carrier. We will be splitting up into two teams: Team one, will consist of myself, Calista, Scout, Fallern and his team, Delta, Walon, Jordan, Matthew, and the Alpha Arc's. We will be going in with a battalion's worth of Clone and Mando Marines, and raid the Assault Carrier to face 'Shipmaster Rtos' Rakae'. Meanwhile, The rest of you are raiding the indicated CCS-Class Battlecruiser for boarding Operations, and to attempt to capture the ship for data. You will also have a Battalion of Marine's with ya for support."

"Don't think we'll need it." Darman said, with a grin. "But...it's nice to have an audience." Etain just rolled her eyes at her husband's antics. "You can be really cocky sometimes, you know Darman." She said, with a smile.

"Ah, but that's what you like about me, right?" Darman said, with a grin. There were a couple of chuckles as Etain smacked the back of the former Republic Commando's head "What's that supposed to mean huh?" She asked with a dangerous look in her eyes.

Before Darman could come up with an answer, it was then a Clone in Mandalorian armor ran up to them. "Mand'alor, we are receiving a transmission from a ship that just entered our sensor range." He said. "Hull configuration identified it as a UNSC ship."

Ryu rose an eyebrow at that. "What do they want?" he asked.

"Here it for yourself." The Clone said, and then he played the message.

"\_This is Captain James Cutter of the UNSC Ship Spirit of Fire.\_" the voice of a man said. "\_I am requesting to communicate with Ryu Hisanaga, I wish to speak to him about about the Covenant Threat you seem to be facing.\_"

Ryu blinked in surprise. "Well, patch it through to my personal communicator." He said. The Clone nodded, and he pressed a few buttons on his armor-mounted datapad, and he then nodded, and Ryu put his Helmet on to use its built-in comm unit. "This is Ryu Hisanaga to Captain James Cutter." He said. "What do you need?"

"\_Thank you for accepting the transmission.\_" James said. "\_My Ship has a large complement of troops and vehicles we can deploy to the surface to where your forces seem to be engaging Covenant ground forces, and we can establish a mobile base as well for additional support.\_"

Ryu thought about that for a moment. "If you could get some help down to them, it would be greatly appreciated." he said. "But if you could, me and my forces are about to attempt a boarding action against two of the Covenant Ships. If you could provide us some additional support in those ops as well, it would be very helpful."

"\_I can send in a few squads of ODST's in, they specialize in those.\_" Cutter said. "\_We also have a team of Three Spartan's onboard, so they can deploy as well.\_"

Ryu didn't know what a 'Spartan' was, but he guessed they were some special Commando Unit like Delta or Omega. "That would be perfect." he said. "Send one to the ground attack force, another to one boarding party, while the other takes the second. And these 'ODST's' would be useful. We will gladly accept the help."

"\_Yes, that should work.\_" the captain said. "\_We will move our ship into your fleet, with your permission of course.\_"

"You have it." Ryu said. "Good luck captain, and may the force be with you."

There was a slight pause on the other end. "\_Same too you.\_" He said, and the transmission ended.

Ryu then turned to the others. "Alright everyone, we got some help!" He said. "Apparently a UNSC Ship just arrived in system, and is offering support. They're sending some of their troops to the surface, as well as helping us out in our boarding ops. So everyone, Mount up!"

## 2. Chapter 2: Third battle for Harvest

**\*\*Holy S\*\*t guys! 18 Reviews, 41 Favorites, 1,988 Hits, and 36 Alerts from just my FIRST Chapter! Wow thanks! I didn't think it would become that popular so quickly! Well I know better than to disappoint you guys then! So here we are at last, the second chapter of Star Wars: Spartan Alliance! Please Enjoy everyone! And don't forget to Review and give me some ideas! I NEED YOUR REVIEWS! THEY TELL ME WHAT TO DO!\*\***

**\*\*Also, I've begun posting my other Star Wars fic 'We Dared' A while ago, that explains why a lot of the characters you saw in the last chapter are alive and well. I suggest reading the first few chapters**

of that if you want to understand things a bit better.\*\*

\*\*Also, Dragonknightryu, F-14 Tomcat Lover, and Patriot-112 helped me out with this Chapter, so thanks goes to them!\*\*

"Talking"

"\_Radio\_"

'\_Thinking\_'

\_\*\*Chapter 1: The Third battle for Harvest\*\*\_

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\_\*\*July 10th, 2552 AD\*\*\_

\_\*\*Location: Unknown, Harvest\*\*\_

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"How could we have missed that?" the woman with short blond hair asked the Duty Officer.

The man simply shrugged, trying hard not to look at the shapely woman's body. She had been enjoying a well earned vacation and as such, she had come straight from the 'beach' to the command 'bunker.' As such she was clad still in just a pair of bikini bottoms and a simple button up shirt which revealed she did not have the top as well as a healed scar over the right side of her chest.

The man wasn't surprised by either, there was hardly any real sun to get a tan in the place they called home and she was one of toughest soldiers in their military. Still that left him trying to keep his face up, he wasn't the most successful ladies man, classified simply as the pervert in training, but he wasn't one to cross certain lines. Like the one that involved this woman.

Not only could she crush him like he was an ant, but if her lover ever found out... well... it was safer not to dwell on that.

"I'm guessing a new type of FTL to go with the new look," the picked up his cup to have a sip of tea, but made an instant sour face instead.

"Cold?" she asked studying the holo-projections.

"Out, dammit," he turned and found that his teapot was also out, that meant coffee, "Double dammit."

"Wait?" the woman watched as a friendly IFF suddenly sprang across their map and the ship's name and profile, history and class, everything came up on the screens, "Red Team," she finished reading softly.

"That's ol'Uncle James for ya ma'am," the DO's smile looked ready to break his face, "He's as loyal as Hood himself of even, if I may, the

Chief."

"John is always a patriot," the woman smiled in fond memory, "That's one thing that will never change about him."

"Maybe he might even break that double damned of a satan bred bitch's neck if we're lucky," the man turned to see \_Spirit \_launch a lot of dropships, "Then we might be able to go home, but as far as I'm concern ma'am," the DO's voice was shifting as he ignored her and studied the map, "Winterfall is our home."

"The only home my daughter has ever known," the woman leaned back from where she had been and stared down at the technicians, operators, officers, and more, both civilian and military, all on the run from one Admiral Parangosky and her madness, "Sound the alert, we can't escape and they're likely to spot us, so we're fight," the decision made, she was sick of hiding, now was the time.

"Y~es Ma'am," the DO shouted out the order, "DEFCON-ONE! Combat Alert Alpha! All personnel report to battle posts, all warships and planes immediate launch when ready! Launch Alert units, target Silos Alpha through Hotel at the enemy fleet, watch out for friendly borders, target in accordance. Prep SAM Batteries, ready Anti-Air Batteries, target SSM Batteries to support Alpha Base and to repel any approach, report when ready."

The alarms came to life as the blond woman left. It didn't take her long to get to cross the base and arrive at her destination. It was the Spartan Barracks, where mostly Spartan-IIIs lived, a few Spartan-IIs and some Freelancers that had 'quit' the program. At least the personnel that didn't have families, like her, but her primary suit of armor was here and as she entered the building, she was already stripping off her shirt as she headed to the Armory.

She arrived to find her fellow Spartans working their way into their body suits. Some were stripping down, others suiting up. Some Spartans that were going off duty, had already been taking off their armor while others that had been going on duty had been armoring up. Now both these groups hurried to get their armor on as the Alert Spartans trooped past and out to their posts.

The blonde made her way to her armor, a female tech smiled at her, she was pulling triple duty in getting the Spartans armored up, operational, and loaded up for battle... and alone too.

"What gives Daisy?" one of the Spartans, a S-III, inquired angrily.

Daisy-023 turned to the speaker, a Alpha Company wash out, largely because he was lazy and not willing to conform to the the S-III Program. He kept his red hair in a military crew cut, but he styled it, he even had a silver stripe running at the quarter place on the left hand side of his head with a small bang jutting out over his left eye that was also dyed silver. He had a handsome face, though he always, eternally had a small bandage across the bridge of his nose and sharp blue eyes that glowed for some odd reason, even before his augmentations.

He was Ardal-A330, a kid of Irish descent when he signed on, though he had lost his old Irish accent, he could still call upon when he

was really pissed off. He was 'wash out' for being a number of things, all generally falling under the headings of insubordinate, gold brick, overly independent, and generally a trouble maker. He had been removed from Alpha Company and reassigned as an early Headhunter with his lover Honora-310, another of Irish descent.

She had been killed on a mission by ONI operatives when both learned of several illegal ops being conducted, the most notable had been Project Freelancer's use of Forerunner technology. The technology that the Covenant had based their own on, had studied, and torn apart to do so...

And they had found a means for easy access, but never bothered to inform Lood Hood or any other officer in the military, simply so they could hold onto the power or the technology or both, it did not matter.

Now Ardal lived alone with his daughter of barely 12 years, like Daisy and her daughter, Rose, of nearly 16 years.

"The \_UNSC Spirit of Fire\_ and an unknown fleet are engaged in combat with a Two to One Ratio over a Covenant Naval Squadron that includes a \_CAS\_-class and a pair of \_CCS\_-class with five escorts," she answered turning back, bottom and sandals removed, if one looked at her form it was sure they would easily see a number of small scars across her body aside from the lone large one on her chest, most fading, but some still very prominent, "We're going to fight, this is our home, Winterfall is ours and so is Harvest, we're not going to hide anymore on what's ours," her voice was filled with conviction as she remembered the day her old friend Ralph-303 and a platoon of Marines had died, but ONI had decided she was valuable, valuable enough to allow a Pelican, its crew, and a platoon of Marines to be lost in order to recruit her for the S-III Program.

Too bad for them, she turned out to be pregnant and became the only Spartan to ever desert twice.

"Good," the Irish man stated, "Time th' Coven'ant learn a wee bit 'bout defeat."

"Agreed," Jack-B810 stated as he sheathed his knife in his Base Security Armor Mk. V Chest Plate.

"Hell yeah!" Mildred-301 said as racked a shotgun round as she finished loading up her. FJ/PARA Mk. V armor.

This was followed by others agreeing and soon the Spartans began to spill out for battle once more.

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\_\*\*Frozen North of Harvest\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

As the Spartans readied for war, up on the surface of the frozen tundra of what was left of Harvest's surface, the ground began to rumble and quake. There had been some isolated Covenant patrols, but they had been cleared out moments earlier, not a one reporting in

either. This was good as the seemingly earthquake turned out to be hidden missile silos and launch bays.

Massive doors and hatches yawning open with shuddering moans, like great beasts coming back to life...

The reference wouldn't be far from the truth as renewed rumbling began.

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\_\*\*UNSC Spirit of Fire\*\*\_

\_\*\*Joining Formation with the Mandolore Fleet\*\*\_

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"Captain I'm picking up unusual activity on Harvest's frozen surface areas," Serina had detected a sudden surge in activity, "It is almost as if something more was hidden down there."

Captain James Gregory Cutter turned to the Smart AI and then back out to the unfolding battle. He had already ordered all the Shortswords to sortie down to the planet and the Longswords had also launched, dividing into escort and CAP. There weren't many left of either though and he had to be careful and frugal in their use, and yet he couldn't allow his command to be a handicap in this battle.

Something his eager pilots were proving as they showed a quick way to deal with Seraph fighters.

"Serina, remember last time," Cutter voiced with a sound of slight annoyance, "Plus it has been a decade and a half since we've been here, perhaps Harvest isn't as abandoned as anyone thought."

"Yes captain," Serina replied before blinking at what she was seeing, "That would be a lot of ICBMs and ships to be included in that statement."

And Serina showed what she meant on the Tactical Map. A battlegroup of 10 UNSC ships were clawing for space along with wing after wing of fighters and 8 ICBMs could be seen with them, streaking out ahead of the fighters and ships. It was a long time since \_Spirit\_ had been in company of a group of ships or any ships for that matter. Finding a humanoid race that could pass for humans was a good thing as they had powerful ships, but there was nothing like the sight of a Destroyer, two Frigates, two Corvettes and UNSC Navy ones no less, and five Sloops.

Not the strongest gathering, but a good punch none the less and the Destroyer looked to be a new class and half of the fighters were clearly a new fighter design joining with 30 Longswords.

"We're home Serina, now let's get back to business."

"Aye Captain," the AI responded and began to communicate, even passing the information along to their new allies who were shocked to see the rising

battlegroup.

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

\_\*\*Winterfall Naval Dock\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

Aboard the \_UNSC Robin Hood\_, a new \_Salamis\_-class Destroyer like the \_UNSC The Heart of Midlothian\_, Captain Ludmila Hayase sat in her chair as her crew prepped their ship for launch. The \_Robin Hood\_'s sister ship, \_UNSC Mask of Zorro\_, had already launched and was currently engaging the Covenant from the proverbial behind. She had hoped to soon join them, she had been informed though, by her brother, the DO who started the battle for Winterfall, Army Major Luca Hayase, that Daisy-023 and her Spartans needed her to ferry them and some Special Forces and additional Marines right down the throat of the \_CAS\_-class so they could capture it.

Ludmilla Hayase and her younger brother, had been both born on the colony of Karlsland, a largely ethnic German colony. Their mother had been a Korean-Japanese woman on vacation from Earth herself. Their parents had met and fallen in love and married, happy ending... until the Insurrection bombed the colony.

The Insurrection had wanted to take Karlsland from the UNSC since it had produced some of the best soldiers from the Outer Colonies for the UNSC and produced some of the best equipment as well. The local Titanium mines were of the highest purity ever seen and the land and sea were so fertile, that its farms and fish industries fed a good number of colonies as well, including Stronghold, the UNSC's incomplete fortress world in the Outer Colonies.

The war had lasted long enough by that point though, that aside from the UNSC Army's garrison, there was also a free standing militia on Karlsland with more than 5 million men and women under arms, nearly a quarter of the population. Karlsland was almost a fortress colony herself as well with the large military presence of the Army and UNSC Air Force which had valuable training bases on the planet.

Nevertheless, the Insurrection had tried to take the colony, only to be beaten back, but their father and mother had passed away in the fighting and their grandfather on their mother's side had been killed when his ship, an earlier \_UNSC Aegis Fate\_, had rammed the flagship of the Innies fleet, a stolen \_Gorgon Refit\_-class Destroyer with a fully working Second Generation MAC Gun that held 5 times the rounds of the First Generation MACs on the non-refit \_Gorgon\_-class.

Their grandmothers had both passed away years earlier at different times. Leaving an ailing grandfather to raise them. He was a man though who took pride in a long and proud German heritage and one that included a military line all the way back to the founding Kaiser's native Prussia. Their grandfather taught them well and had lived long enough to stick the family sword into the neck of a shocked Covenant Field Marshal.

She wore a ring fashioned from that Elite's golden armor, her brother a similar ring. She also had to admit, that for an aggressive commander as her brother was, he was quite lazy, his aggressive and

tactical skill the only saving grace aside from a good heart. Since he was Army, she gave him the family sword and she instead carried the family dagger, which was more suited to the enclosed spaces of her ships she had been on.

"Daisy-023 requesting to come aboard ma'am," she heard the requested from beside her and Ludmila turned to see Daisy in the Mark V version of her CQC armor with the same coloring scheme.

"Granted," the 58 year old woman replied, though she didn't look it.

Like most in Winterfall's older population, she looked around half her actual age or even less. More than three quarters of everyone had spent years in Cryo Stasis and now were only really beginning to age. A good number had been held there, against their will by either the Innes or ONI or even Freelancer, but that hardly mattered, after the Freelancer defectees had released that program's advances in the medical field.

As such, everyone was aging much slower, and many were now even young in appearance and physically fit again to survive the harsh life on Harvest.

Ludmilla herself appeared in her late 20s to early 30s. She wore the new Naval General Issue Armor that had replaced, at least in the hidden city's military, older Duty Uniforms and combat uniforms. Being a ship's captain, her armor was a bit bulkier as it had more protective armor and equipment to facilitate her station, plus, since it was based largely on the SPI series of Semi-Powered Armor -albeit toned down for normal humans-, she could actually carried a full size carbine rather than just either a Pistol or SMG. Nevertheless, the armor hugged a well formed figure that covered her tanned dust colored skin and the helmet hid an attractive face with its Germanic appearance that blended in with distinctive Asian traits, such as the eyes, though her's were a proud robin blue and her hair was lighter shade of brown.

Her brother was the opposite with a strong Asian look with Germanic traits. He still had a proud robin blue pair of eyes, but his hair was darker shade of blonde. He was also a bit short, standing at only 5'8" and yet he had been known to go fist to fist with Brutes and emerge victorious.

She herself stood at 6' even and had more of a reputation for suddenly appearing behind her enemies backs, even when commanding a ship. Such a skill had landed her originally in ONI's Prowler Corps before she crossed The Bitch and her brother had done the same as a member of Army SPECWAR/Group 3. They were both rescued with others, by Daisy and other ONI branded traitors who operated, with plenty of mocking towards Paragonsky, under the direct control and command of the United Earth Intelligence Directorate or UEID, the civilian intelligence service that operated under the control of the UEG and advised both the President of the UEG and Fleet Admiral Lord Terrence Hood.

So looking at the woman that had saved her life and given her a chance to start her career renewed as part of Operation GILGAMESH, which was exactly why they had remained hidden, using Freelancer technology to hide Winterfall...

"So what's the plan and I take Lord Hood was less than pleased?"

"I think someone forgot to tell him," Daisy shrugged, it wouldn't matter soon anyways, "And the plan is simple," Daisy pointed out the bridge window, "That view is going to be their massive hanger."

"I like, but how?" Ludmila was crazy, but not insane.

"That's your job, I'm just a Spartan."

"Geez thanks," Ludmila shook her head, good thing \_Salamis\_-class were like their Greek namesake, a tough battle to be fought.

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\_\*\*Same time\*\*\_

\_\*\*En-route to Alpha  
Base\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

Corporal Lucy Forge looked at herself in the side mirror again before shutting the faceplate on her Arctic Camouflage GI-SPA, still not so used to be so young again. Looking barely older than merely 20 years, the only child of Sergeant John Forge, was in fact close closer to 50 years old. Since the death of her mother in a tragic vehicular accident, Lucy had been on her own, but like her father she was tough and had tried to join the Marines, only to find that she was somehow Blacklisted from joining them, much to the recruiter's frustration since he had served with her father.

So she joined the Army, lying through her teeth that she was 16 rather than 14 years old. She clearly looked her real age and the woman tapped the official documents about her. Then she tapped the Forge name and looked at a picture of her father for a moment, before stating that the records were in error and welcoming her into the UNSC Army.

She later learned that the Army recruiter was both the wife of the Marine Recruiter and a cousin of her father.

Feeling a jolt she looked over the M70 Asynchronous Laser-Induction System and glared down at the driver as she shouted at him to keep their M864 C2L variant of the M12 Force Application Vehicle steady.

The driver, one Specialist Ryan O'Malley, who was born on a refugee ship, only joked he would if the road actually existed. Their passenger, Private Second Class Nalan Turan, known as the Daughter of Turan, is the only known survivor of the Turan Colony, remained silent. That wasn't uncommon, as she had a tendency to just only talk little or with single word responses. No one held it against her.

"Grunts," she suddenly said and fired her SRS-99 AM Rifle.

Unlike most users of the SRS-99, Nalan preferred using largely HE or

Incendiary rounds. Seconds like after firing two shots, two thunderous blasts explained why. Though she did still carry and use the normal AP rounds, she carried preferred a wider variety of ammo and her new suit of armor, definitely allowed her to carry plenty.

Turning to look at his squadmate, the freckle faced and energy filled O'Malley posed a question to the tan skinned desert beauty, "Okay, where are their leaders?"

Suddenly the Warthog ran over something and then another something, both screaming out as they were run over and the woman never altered her viewpoint once.

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\_\*\*1.5 BBY\*\*\_

\_\*\*Location: Harvest System\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

A squadron of four Custom-built Z-95 Headhunter's just finished up ganging up on a lone Type-31 XMF Seraph-class Fighter, obliterating it. \_"Yeehaw! That's the Fifth one today!"\_ Said the pilot of the Silver/White colored Starfighter. \_"We are on a roll!"\_

"Don't get cocky on me, Blitz-4." Said the pilot of the lead Black/Silver trimmed Z-95, a 25 year old male with black hair and blue eyes wearing an armored flight suit. "There's still plenty of enemies to kill out here!"

\_ "I can get all the cocky I want, Kale!" Sebastian Even, a 23 year old male with blonde hair and blue eyes said.

\_ "What was that Seb?" Said the female pilot of the Green/Silver Headhunter, Naomi Stark, a Silver haired 20 year old with dark green hair and gold eyes. \_ "Care to repeat that for me?"\_

\_ "Uuuh, nothing! I didn't say anything!"\_ Sebastian said, as he accelerated his Starfighter away.

Kale Animas chuckled as he shook his head. "Ok enough of that, people." He said, getting his team together again. "Form up, and let's engage the next enemy formation. Leon, your with me this time."

\_ "Sir!"\_ Said the pilot of the Red/Silver trimmed Headhunter, a 19 year old male with short red hair and green eyes. The four Z-95's of the Blitz Squadron formed up around their leader as they searched for more prey.

The space battle had just kicked off when the Covenant Fleet ahead of them opened fire. The alien's must have been ever so confident that their first Salvo of Plasma Torpedoes would have finished their fleet off instantly. This was to such a great degree that they didn't even launch their own fighters at the time.

Kale could only wish he could imagine their surprise when their first Salvo only impacted against their ships' shields. Though they, as

proud warriors, would admit that the Plasma Torpedoes had taken a big chunk out of them on all ships, it had proven that they hadn't been enough to hamper their ability to fight back. As the return volley quickly proved and that was before the UNSC ICBMs reached up at them as well.

While the Covenant had been shocked by Humans now possessing shields, they had failed to react in time to both the UNSC's ICBMs and the return volley of fire from the Warrior race's weapons. Then the UNSC ships began a barrage of missiles, signifying their entry into battle and catching the Covenant off guard, surprising them greatly. Of course the Mando'ade fleet used this to their advantage by ordering their own fighters and bombers to attack the Covenant Fleet hard and fast that they were thrown into confusion trying to right themselves to defend against two attacks.

As such, early on in the battle, two Corvettes were already sunk by the bombers alone and the UNSC Longswords had been able to close and damage the engines and hit a nerve center on another.

Now, the Covenant had finally gotten deployed all their fighters at last. The small ones were about as fast and nimble as the Imperial TIE fighters, but the bigger ones were only slightly less so and had much better defenses with not only shielding, but heavy armor. Of course, they were still no match for the Blitz Squad's skills.

The small UNSC ships had also arrived with their bigger sister and joined the Mando'ade fleet, deploying all their remaining fighters and bombers even as the last were launched from the planet below.

"\_Another Squadron incoming!\_" Leon immediately reported, spotting them first, "\_Eight Seraphs and twelve Banshee Space Types.\_"

"Ok, let's take'em out!" Kale ordered as their Z-95's banked towards the formation of Covenant starfighters. It didn't take long for them to sight them, Seraph's in front, Banshee's trailing from behind.

"Ok, fire on my mark..." Kale said. "3...2...1...Mark!" The four Starfighters then fired a Salvo of MG5 Concussion Missiles at the enemy formation. The missiles tracked on, and detonated at the enemy formation. The four that were aimed at fighters just exploded of their shields, however the four aimed at the Banshee's destroyed their target's completely, "Alright, take the rest down, one at a time!" The Squad then split up into two teams of two, firing their fighter's KX5 Laser cannons tearing up the remaining eight Space Banshee's in record time leaving just the eight Seraph fighters, who split up just as they did.

Kale pursued the first two Seraphs, waiting for his Targeting computer to form up a lock on one of them. "\_Come on...come on..."\_ he muttered. Then his Computer got a lock on the first one. "Bingo! Eat this!" He shouted as he fired his laser cannons again, the first few shots took down its shields, while the remaining ones took out the fighter itself, turning it into a ball of fire. Kale then performed a Barrel Roll to the right to avoid fire from one of the other Seraphs which were pursuing him as he tried to get a lock on the other unit.

"Leon! A little help would be appreciated!" Kale shouted as he continued to dodge the Seraphs' fire.

"Yes sir!" Leon shouted as his Z-95 appeared from above, guns blazing as his unit fired four missiles, two aimed at each of the pursuing Seraphs. They each detonated, taking out their shields leaving them wide open as Leon finished them off with his Laser cannons.

"Thanks Leon, drinks are on me when we get back." Kale said as he finally got a lock on the fourth Seraph, and ended it quickly with the combined fire of both his missiles and lasers.

At this time Sebastian and Naomi had finished their four Seraphs, and the squadron reformed again. "Ma'am, I just got word from the Redemption." Naomi said. "Hostile Reinforcements had just arrived. Three CCS-Class Battlecruisers, two Destroyers, and four SDV-Class Corvettes have just entered system. But one of the Cruisers and two Corvettes are splitting off and heading for the surface."

Kale cursed a bit. "Shit, they're probably moving to help their ground forces take down Zack and his troops!" he said. "Has the UNSC ship sent any help yet?"

"Just got word, they launched almost all of their so-called Pelican, Albatross, and Pod Dropships with the latter carrying something called a 'Base Starter' towards the surface a sometime ago." Sebastian said. "They also launched additional Pelicans for the Dragoon's boarding ops that are about to commence. They also launched and retained some of their fighters for CAP duties, whatever that means, but they've been getting hammered for a bit and could use some help."

"Alright, then let's give'em a hand!" Kale shouted as he banked his Headhunter left, soon followed by the others.

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\*\*LAAT/i Dropship\*\*

\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*

A squadron of fourteen LAAT/i Dropships, affectionately called by their users as Larty, flew in loose, but stable formation as they approached the Covenant Fleet. On the lead Dropship Ryu had walked into the Pilot's Cockpit. "Looks like the called in reinforcements." Ryu said as he saw the nine additional ships arrive.

"Yes sir." The pilot said. "But it looks like one of those Cruisers are going planetside." Ryu nodded as he saw the lone Battlecruiser head towards the planet surface, followed by two of the Heavy Corvettes, one of which would complete its journey painfully as a pair of UNSC Sloops ambushed it from behind, destroying the engines and sending the ship into a death spiral that it would never survive. Another Heavy Corvette was detached from the main fighting and sent to replace the lost ship as the two sloops ran for all their worth, heading back to where they came from to likely resupply.

"We gotta finish this up quick to help out Zack and Serra's Forces." Ryu said. "They won't last long against all the firepower."

"Relax sir, we picked up word that the local forces have dispatched some twenty thousand ground troops," the gunner smirked, "And apparently they've got bomber and gunship support, we're missing all the fun up here."

"Here comes the UNSC force." The pilot said, interrupting the trigger happy gunner, and Ryu felt his jaw fall in his helmet as he counted nearly 50 Pelican Dropships pulled up alongside and behind them as well and those were the ones he could see.

"Mando'ade Dropships, this is Sierra 620," a male voice came through the Radio, "Are you reading me, over?"

"This is LAAT/i Dropship Honor 010 to Sierra 620, we read you loud and clear." the Pilot said, thankful that these guys used Basic words as well, it made life easier on them all, "You guys ready for some action?"

"Ready, willing, and able Honor 010," the Pelican Pilot growled predatorily, as though insulted, "So\_ which one are we going after first?"

"We will be spitting up, twenty-five of your dropships will go with sixteen of our own to board the Battlecruisers, while the rest of us board that Assault Carrier." Ryu said as he activated his Comm. "Hope you and your boys are ready for this."

"We're more than ready, sir." Sierra 620 responded, and Ryu could tell he was grinning. "It's time we gave the Covie's a little bit of what they've been giving us these last few years, but wait, hold up, looks like someone else what's to join the party!"

Everyone looked to the UNSC Robin Hood glide into formation with them. The sloping angles were a far cry from the hard flats of previous ships. She also had more of a gloss navy blue paint job than the stealth flat blacks of the past.

The ship took aim at a pair of Covenant Destroyers attempting to bar their path. Then, instead of a pair of golden comets, a burst of crimson light shot forth from the Salamis! The shots flew on to target and smashed into the first Destroyer, collapsing the weakened shield and boring through, actually boring, through the hull of the Covenant ship to collapse the shields and strike the hull of the second ship.

The approaching Spirit of Fire and Mando'ado Dropships filled with crew and assault troops whose jaws now hung open. They couldn't believe the power that the UNSC Robin Hood possessed. With a single twin blast of energized energy, two enemy ships were badly hurt.

The first Destroyer broke in two as explosions tore it in half. Neither section lasted long as secondary explosions ripped both pieces apart in fiery displays. The debris hammering away at its sister ship.

The second ship was pummeled by debris and the crew attempted to activate their plasma torpedoes. This quickly proved to be a mistake

as the damaged hull sections were just above the torpedo bank. The explosion tore open a long gash in the flank of the Covenant ship and shoved her forcibly in the direction of her charges.

The Robin Hood wasn't done yet. She fired off a volley of Archer Missiles and the self guided ordnance flew straight and true, pursuing the dying Covenant ship. The missiles quickly impacted and turned the purple painted ship into a giant fragmentation bomb that peppered both the Assault Carrier and the Battlecruiser with debris.

Some missiles failed to hit before the destroyer exploded and instead flew on, mixed in with the debris and confused from both the sudden loss of their target and the flying death all about them, the missiles instead home in on the Covenant ships.

The debris from the destroyed destroyer hammered both ships, dropping their shields down. With shields failing in certain places, both debris and missiles slipped through and pounded the two ships. Eventually the shield emitters were lost and the combination strike pounded both ships, opening up large holes in their hulls and venting entire sections to space.

"\_And that people is our opening," \_someone from the Robin Hood declared.

Ryu grinned a bit "That's good to hear." He said. "We're splitting up now! Good luck!" With that, the forces split up into two forces, each with the assigned LAAT/i's and Pelican Dropships heading each for their own targets.

"\_Approaching the Target.\_" The Pilot said as they approached the Assault Carrier.

Ryu then activated the Comm to one of the Pelican's. "Sierra 620, is there anything I should know about these ships before we try to board them?" he asked.

"\_Well, according to the data we've thus far acquired, and what we have ourselves, they have to drop a portion of their shields in order to fire their weapons, or launch fighters and dropships.\_" The Pilot of the first Pelican said. "\_But they close them pretty quickly.\_"

"Roger that," he replied before turning to the large ship, "UNSC vessel, what about your information?"

"UNSC Robin Hood\_ Actual here," \_a woman's voice replied, "\_Nothing too different, but we have learned that they can jettison entire sections if need be and that the ships tend to be real open affairs, with multi levels on some decks, but other than that, most of our infantry carry ordnance that can open them up once inside, though I'd be quick none the less.\_"

Ryu nodded "Alright, that'll have to do," he said before turning to the pilot of his own transport "Pilot! See if our weapons can punch a hole in their shields long enough for us to get through!" he ordered.

"Yes sir!" The pilot said turning to the gunner, "Activate all guns,

preparing to fire!

"Target locked in!" the gunner shouted and then, "Firing!"

The flock of Larties fired a swarm of Rockets and followed by forward lasers, arching towards the Assault Carrier's Hanger Bays. They impacted against the shields of the Covenant ship's hanger bays, but the Dropships continued their attack, never ceasing to fire. The continuous fire was obviously starting to make a difference when the UNSC dropships opened up as well, since reinforced by additional Pelicans from the UNSC Battle Fleet and Winterfall.

All that firepower on the shields protecting the hanger bays from vacuum was simply too much and they couldn't take it anymore. The shields flared briefly before winking out in a burst of light and static. The sudden loss of the shields caused immediate decompression of the targeted hanger bays and equipment and personnel were vented right into the black.

"\_Bingo! Shields around the hangers are dead! Let's move in!\_" Pelican Sierra 620 said as they moved forward, but then someone shouted out a warning.

"\_WHAT THE HELL IS THE \_HOOD \_DOING?\_"

Hundreds of eyes turned to the lone destroyer as it plowed its way through the debris field and came about, firing its main weapons again. It was clear she was shooting open the stern entrance into the Main Hanger Deck. Once the doors and shields there were blasted into oblivion, the \_Hood \_then proceeded to ram itself into the Main Hanger Deck.

Once inside, no one knew what was happening with the ship.

"Alright, everyone lock and load!" Ryu called out clearly impressed by the \_Robin Hood'\_s method of boarding, "And get Ready for some Hard Contact!"

"Yes sir!" came the combined reply of all the men in the Dropship as they approached the hanger. Once they passed into the Hanger Bay, the Covenant Ranger Forces inside responded small-arms fire like Plasma Pistols and Rifles, Carbines, Plasma Repeaters, and even a few fixed emplacements. This deluge of incoming fire was doing little to damage the LAAT/i's thick armored hide.

Ryu grinned and watched the Turret Gunners open fire. The Side Turrets swiveled, and the gunners inside began cutting loose with beams of emerald laser fire, touching away the hostiles in the hanger. Then the Larties came into contact with the floor and then the side-doors opened, spilling forth Mandalorians and Clones alike who hopped out and began opening fire against the Covenant defenders as soon as their magnetized boots hit the deck plating.

Ryu activated his two Gauntlet-mounted Lightsabers as he jumped out, and was almost instantly confronted by a tall alien, as tall or taller than a Wookiee, wearing white armor with teal lining. The helmet had a light blue forward section and the alien was fully enclosed. A streamlined jet pack of some sort was on his back.

Ryu ducked under a swipe of the alien's fist, and stabbed his

left-handed lightsaber into the Elite's chest, killing him almost instantly.

"SECURE THE HANGER!" Ryu shouted to his troopers, "CLEAR A PATH SO THE OTHERS CAN LAND!"

"Sir yes sir!" His men replied, as they pressed their attack. Ryu turned too where Calista was, and smirked seeing her going to town with squad of Jackals Rangers with her Vibroblade. Fallern and his team were also engaging a Squad of Elites from behind cover.

It quickly became obvious that the Mando'ado soldiers had a clear advantage. Thanks to a combination of factors, they were pushing back the few defenders. It was also clear that they all didn't have the same mobility and the smaller ones lacked any kind of real armor or shielding that the invading Mandalorian and Clone troopers did have. The fight was quickly beginning to wind down with heavy losses to the borders.

Then suddenly, the energy shields to the hanger were restored, but only with enough power to restore gravity and atmosphere to the vented area due to battle damage. With the returning presence of atmosphere, a surprisingly close to Galactic Standard of Oxygen-Nitrogen mixture, came the reinforcements for the beleaguered Covenant Rangers.

Ryu raised a hand and blasted a bolt of lightning at a Covenant Elite attempting to rush up behind him, roasting him inside out as he continued with the attack. It was then that one of the UNSC Dropships then entered the hanger at long last, though the fighting had only been going on for barely five minutes, and opened its troop bay. Then several figures in black armor jumped out and immediately took cover, which became apparent when a Plasma Repeater bolt struck one man with a grazing, but incapacitating wound. Aside from the lack of shields and protective ceramic plating, the dark colored armor reminded Ryu a bit of their own armor, but there were still many differences more between the two, that much was clear.

However, the one that really caught Ryu's attention was the last figure who exited the Dropship, and for a moment he thought he was looking at a heavily armored droid.

It was tall, actually taller than anyone else there, excluding the aliens. The giant stood at around seven feet and moved with a grace that belies its organic nature under all that armor. It wore dark sage green armor with red trim along the chest and shoulders that covered him or her from head-to-toe, and the helmet it had possessed a golden visor. They were also wielding a weapon that reminded him of a Z-6 Rotary Cannon and was attached to what looked like a large pack attachment that must have both powered and carried the ammo for the weapon.

'\_I'm gonna make a good guess and assume that the 'Spartan' Captain Cutter mentioned.\_' Ryu thought as another Pelican unloaded just next to him.

The next ships that came in were another pair Larties, and out came Jordan, Matthew and others of the Dragoon Corps. Jordan instantly drew out his double-bladed Vibroblade and charged forward, ducking and rolling under Plasma fire as he cut through Grunts and Jackals

alike. The others following him engaging targets of opportunity at every encounter, some getting into melee duels with the Elites.

Another group of Larties entered, these ones not belonging to the Dragoons, but the troopers that were dropped off were welcomed none the less. The leader of this group slammed into the area next to Ryu as he ducked low to talk to the speak with the Clone commander. Seeing the ID marker on the Clone's armor IFF showing him as CC-1010 Commander Fox, formerly of the Coruscant Guard.

"Well this is a surprise Commander, didn't know you were among the ranks," Ryu stated offhandedly.

"Yes sir, I'm aware we haven't had time to get acquainted," Fox popped up and shot off a couple of blaster shots with his pistol and was rewarded with two dead Fuel Rod toting Grunts, "Then again, I only just got assignment and then we were shipped out for this."

From behind their cover the two watched a pair of Larties and another a trio of Pelicans enter. The Larties dropped off more of Fox's men, but the three Pelicans had \*\*Snow Castle Base\*\* printed on their flanks rather than a ship's name. Then out came armored soldiers, colored the same as the earlier soldiers, even their armor looked very much the same, but these men and women were fully armored with a mix of metal and ceramic armor with protective ablative coating that allowed them to survive a few shots from the Covenant's weapons for once.

As the two watched, several soldiers shot off from their fellows, finding good places, and then hunkering down and simply phasing from sight. They would reappear if they moved or fired, but now they were like phantoms on the battlefield. The others were a mix of hardcore combat soldiers, field officers, specialists, and support engineers among others, several soldiers even set down small tracked chassis and then added a multi barreled weapon on top and then took cover as the small remote vehicle rolled forward, spitting high velocity death at hundreds of rounds a second.

"This is getting interesting," Fox said with a dry tone.

"Indeed," Ryu agreed before jumping out of cover with Fox in time for both to avoid a Fuel Rod shot, "But later! To battle my brother!"

"For Mandalore!" Fox responded with his rifle blazing away, dropping Covenant left and right as he charged the line.

Ryu engaged a red armored Elite in close combat, both wielding their weapons of choice. The Elite Major used the signature weapon of the Sanghelli, the Type-1 Anti-Personnel Weapon, better known as the Plasma Sword. Ryu on the other hand used his custom Lightsabers mounted on his gauntlets.

Ryu deflected a forward thrust, something that was not easy, both due to his opponent's height and weight and the unique design of the double pronged weapon. Ryu tried to slash with his other weapon, but the Elite backed off, but suffered a deep cut to his armor that dropped his shields. The Elite roared and clutched at the wound that

was obviously inflicted and with an annoyed grunt, pulled back with obvious pain and trouble.

Ryu pressed his attack, but then found that the opening he thought he saw, was in fact a feint. He barely got his weapons up in time to block the counter, but he was knocked off balance from the force of the blow. Staggering, Ryu went with it and rolled to recover and blocked a downward slash that would have cut him in two.

The sudden burst of fire that rented sections of the shoulder armor, the Elite pulled back as a woman in some sort of assault armored approached. She fired a large, scoped rifle that barked out a three round burst, if Ryu's ears didn't betray him, at the Elite who jumped back. The woman just kept a steady aim on him and fired, but the Elite with both skill and a snarl escaped to fight again.

"Thanks," Ryu said and the woman nodded before speaking.

"That guy is not unknown to us," her voice informative and Ryu noted a C127 painted on her shoulder armor, "He's equal to Sierra-117, so don't feel so bad about him giving you a hard time, though why he hasn't been promoted is beyond me."

Nodding to the woman, they both moved out to rejoin the battle. Ryu cutting down opponents with his Lightsabers and the woman with her Battle Rifle. They soon advanced to join where the thickest of the fighting was occurring. It was clear that they would need more troops and soon as Fox communicated that his tea was the last of the reinforcements, they had to protect their own ships as well.

Then more Pelicans entered, guns blazing and rockets screaming, to drop off more troops from Winterfall and a couple even dropped off vehicles of all things into the crowded hanger bay, which could have served almost like an entire hanger deck on some ships. Ryu had noted the 'bay' was a multi-floor affair, stretching up towards the ceiling with at least 8 or 9 levels. The bay also long, with four dual level hanger openings that were set next to each other with at least 20 meters of spacing between them and each opening at least 40 meters wide and 60 meters tall. The overall length of the hanger 'bay' had to be close 300 meters in length, if not that or slightly more.

The vehicles proved to be useful, surprisingly. The hanger bay stretched out before them at least 90 or 100 meters and was set with stepped levels beyond that. The tracked vehicles which were clearly tanks were especially useful in this open area. The main guns booming loudly with a thunderous roar and then the hull mounted machine guns came to life with the coaxial machine guns next to the main gun.

"\_This is Baker 027 to all friendly forces, be advised that this is the last troop load," \_a male Pelican pilot reported, \_"Additional forces have landed elsewhere and all forces are encouraged to meet up with personnel from the \_Robin Hood\_ for the eventual capture of the enemy ship."\_

Buoyed by the report of other landings aboard the massive ship, the boarding force pushed forward and with the help of the tanks and combat drones, they were able to take the first and then the second landing.

Ryu called for PLEX missiles from the Mandalorian Marines and Clone Marines to saturate the fourth level up. The marines promptly obeyed and numerous Covenant positions were wiped out in seconds. The battle for the hanger bay had been just about won.

Then the Spartans suddenly stood up from cover and with speed that would have shocked Jedi Masters and Sith Lords, crossed the open area and began to battle it out in melee with the Covenant troops.

Following behind the Spartans were the Spartans' allies as they entered the battle for the hatchways out. The first Spartan that Ryu had seen was firing its Gatling gun at anything that wasn't human. Ryu was surprised by the Spartan's strength in how it managed to use their weapon with little to no difficulty. Stopping to turn and lay down a volume of fire that was so intense that many enemies were simply shredded apart by the flying slugs.

In just a matter of minutes after that, the entire hanger was secured, and the ground was littered with the corpses of Covenant soldiers, or in many cases, what was left of them anyways.

Already the supply ships were coming in to replenish the boarding force. Fairly quickly, both a Mando'ado and a UNSC command stations had been set up to coordinate deeper pushes. Aid Stations had been set up as well as the wounded already prepped for transport were taken off the ship and back to friendly vessels or Winterfall itself.

Ryu deactivated his Lightsabers and began to walk up to the UNSC Forces. As he did so, he noted how both groups worked together, but then retreated into their respective camps when there was nothing to be done. He noted ideally that would have to change and pretty soon, but it wasn't unexpected. They were strangers to one another, so it could be allowed.

As he walked up to the forward command post for the UNSC troops, he saw out of the corner of his eye, one of the \_CCS\_-class Battlecruisers suffer a strange blast towards her stern, where the rounded flanks met the stern section of the very large ship. The vessel's lights and weapons suddenly went dark and she began to drift out of formation. He then saw the jet of atmosphere, still burning to a degree, pushing the ship away. That Battlecruiser had suffered a fatal wound and had been knocked out of action, likely losing her main power plant and suffered extensive damage that caused her to vent a lot of atmosphere and crew into the black.

He shook his head, "Which of you are in command?" he asked the gathered mix armored group that had been talking when he walked up.

As expected, the sage green with red trim armored figure stepped forward and spoke, "I am in command of the forces from the \_UNSC Spirit of Fire\_, sir," the figure, now identified as a woman by how surprising soft her voice was, but it was also youthful in a way that he couldn't identify, said, "Spartan-130 at your service."

Ryu nodded as a man in a lighter looking, khaki colored with jungle green camo splotched version of Spartan-130's armor stepped forward and spoke himself, "Spartan-S011, I'm an Army Spartan and I'm not too

fond of not having dirt beneath my boots, so can we get this over with," the man was impatient, not that Ryu blamed him, the guy looked the part of the ground forces of the UNSC and Ryu knew that many Clones absolutely hated having deck plates beneath their boots.

Turning to Spartan-130 after he nodded to Spartan-S011, "Alright, I assume you have been briefed?" He asked, and She nodded "Yes sir," She replied, "We're boarding this ship to eliminate or capture the enemy Commander and seize control of the vessel."

"About damn time," Spartan-S011, "We could use a look at an intact Covenant ship for once."

"Correct," Ryu replied and then moved on, "Now, since this is the first time we are actually fighting this 'Covenant', I'm gonna need you and your troops' help to know what to expect from these guys. Would you happen to know where the bridge of the ship is?"

"According to UNSC Files, Covenant tend to have their Bridges in the center of the ship," 130 stated, "Right where we traditionally would place our CICs."

"Really? Hmm, that's different," Ryu looked thoughtful before shrugging, "Oh well, anyways I figured it would be best if we'll be split up into multiple groups, and make out way too the command deck," he looked at the two Spartans, "That sound good to you?"

"I see no reason not to," S011 said as he looked thoughtful for a moment and then nodded, "We should intermix our teams as well, that way the Covenant can't just plan for one team or another."

"I can go with that," 130 agreed to it as well.

"Sounds like a plan, do you mind to join me Spartan-130?" Ryu asked the young woman.

"Of course, sir," the Spartan agreed, and Ryu nodded. "Alright, then let's get moving...umm...I don't recall you giving me your name?" Ryu admitted embarrassed.

Behind her visor, the Spartan blinked in surprise. "My name, sir?" She asked confused.

"Yes, you do have one right?" Ryu said and turning to S011, "I believe it would be better to call you by your names than just 'Spartan' or by number."

Spartan-S011 replied straight away on that, "Even we Army Spartans keep our names to our own unless respect is earned, it's just how we are, sorry sir."

Ryu smiled in knowing, some Clones were like that as well, "Well, glad to have you and your forces with us none the less," he replied, his tone telling that he understood and respected them for it, before turning to the others "Everyone! Time to move out!" he shouted, "Calista! Delta Squad! Jordan! Matthew! Walon! You and half the Battalion are with me! Null-ARC's, Fallern Team! Scout! You take the rest of us and join a UNSC team, Commander Fox, spread your command

as well and head for the Command Deck each using a different route!  
Move out!"

"Yes sir!" they all shouted and began moving.

"You heard the man!" S011 shouted to his fellow UNSC troopers, "Pair up and fall out!"

"Sir! Yes Sir!" the UNSC force chorused.

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

\_\*\*Meanwhile in the Command Center of the Carrier\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

Rtos was seething in a red hot fury that was getting radically closer to white hot. Various groups of Human dropships had managed to lower the shields of his ship's hanger bays in multiple areas and force many successful landings. The initial forces of Rangers had been overwhelmed and despite the rush of restoring the atmospheric shields and pushing up fresh reinforcements, the boarders had succeeded in driving his forces back with heavy losses and were now spilling into his ship in multiple areas.

Then if that wasn't bad enough, in the Main Hanger, an actual human Warship had managed to force another landing with thousands of soldiers and dozens of vehicles pouring out of it. Worse yet, the invading UNSC Destroyer had managed to live up to the name and destroyed all of his Scarabs. With so many Unclean now boarding his ship and taking over large sections, they were starting to take over. Though he had counterattacked, he had already lost large reserves and the Humans were now heading to his Command Deck, directly where he was.

And that wasn't the worst of it. His forces outside his own ship, his own detachment of ships were getting pummeled. Already both of his remaining \_CCS\_-class ships were in trouble, scratch that, one was in trouble because it was under fire from the other that had been boarded and seized. The third \_CCS\_-class in his command was now dead and drifting and the fourth was so removed from the space battle as to be a moot point.

Another ship exploded signaling that more than half of his remaining forces were gone as well. His forces were taking a real beating from the combined Human fleet, but there wasn't anything he could do to change the situation around. One of the earlier missiles from the boarding destroyer had struck and destroyed his communications relays. He couldn't command his forces and he hadn't heard anything from the repair teams sent to rectify the problem.

"WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE PROPHETS IS HAPPENING? REPORT!" He yelled out. in anger fist crashing down on his command chair.

"Shipmaster! The Humans are continuing their push against our forces! And there are reports of many of the elite Spartans among their ranks!" one of the Elite Minors on the bridge reported, "Also, our warriors report a few of the Humans have strange powers unlike

anything we've encountered before. One Human managed to blast out Lighting with his hands!"

"They must be exaggerating! They are just \_HUMANS!\_" Rtos yelled as he turned towards Neos, "Get your Special Operations Forces prepared for battle!" He ordered, "Kill them all!"

Neos stood there for a moment, "...Yes Shipmaster," he acknowledged and then turned away, leaving the command center.

The Elite calmly walked through the corridors of the \_Purity of Faith\_ as if there were no rush. Taking his time so that he could muse in his thoughts and study the reports that were coming. Things were not looking good as he ordered his men to gather, but it would seem that some would take a few moments to get to the right deck.

As such it left him to think. Neos had been serving the Prophets and the Covenant for years, and his services eventually are what got him assigned to the Special Operations. It was not easy to get into the Covenant Special Operations Forces and everyone had to go through as much Faith testing as combat training.

But Silently, he, and many others under his command and in fact throughout the Sanghelli, had begun questioning the whole war with the Humans. An Elite holds Honor above all else, and they fought for the Covenant because of that Honor as much for Faith. The war was supposed to be quick and produce great honor for those who fought

But...

Neos had begun thinking, what was the honor of killing an entire race down to the last mere child? At first, Neos had followed without question... but as he fought the Humans, he and the troops under his command had grown to respect them. Though usually weak individually -they were not a fully bred warrior race after all-, Humans showed that their true strength laid in groups and when they had something to protect, and never once had he seen a Human simply leave a wounded comrade behind willingly or the soldiers and law keepers merely abandoned the civilians they were sworn to protect.

Others that had fought the humans also began to agree. At first it had largely been the Fieldmasters, but now it had even reached the Sanghelli Council Chambers and there were discussions. Many were beginning to speak out about the crimes that the Humans had supposedly done and that the Prophets remained strangely quiet about. Others stated that they should be brought into the Covenant, made a part of it with standing greater than the aptly named Brutes, but less than the Sanghelli, the Elites as they were called by the Humans.

Some actually advocated that they stand as equals to the Sanghelli, and there was even an old Brute Chieftan that had retired because he had lost a fight to Human in single, unarmed combat, but the Human, rather than finishing him, chose to answer the cries of his comrades.

Some Brutes were even beginning to question some of those that were gaining leadership among their ranks. These were Brutes in the minority of their race, but some were beginning to grow into places

of power. They tended to keep to themselves and only paid lip service, or so rumors claimed, to the Prophets, but were deeply religious and firm followers of the Forerunners.

These Brutes even questioned the 'holy' war against the Humans, but were still the few compared to the multitude of Chieftains hungry for battle and meat.

This continued to make the Elite think. The Humans would be much better allies than enemies. Their weapons, though primitive, show how far they had become. And they have gained the respect of many other troops in the Covenant.

And now, these new Humans...

These 'Mando'ade' have now arrived, and Neos knows what he had previously been told of Humans are false. These Humans, not only have technology on par to the Covenant's own, but from what he had seen from the Security Footage during his study of these new humans...

These Humans are just as skilled as anyone from his species, if not more so as they moved very much like the UNSC soldiers.

It was then he decided to test one of these Mando'ade Humans. He even knew just the right one to carry it out with. With a grin he quickened his pace to where his men were quartered. They haven't had any fun in a while and it had been both a boring and trying deployment.

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

\_\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\_

\_\*\*Hallway on the ship\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

A Grunt gave out a yell as a blue blaster bolt nailed his methane gas tank and sent him flying into the ceiling. "HAHA! That was sweet!" Scorch shouted as he continued firing his DC-17m at the now retreating Grunts. "This is just like taking down Trandoshan Mercenaries! Just shoot their backpacks and away they go!"

Sev grinned as he and the rest of the Mando'ade and UNSC Forces attacked. "For Once, I agree with ya Scorch!" He shouted as he opened up on a Jackal Skirmisher at point-blank range. "Haven't had this much fun in a while!"

"Cut the chatter, you two!" Fixer said as he and Boss walked forward, letting loose with their Blasters mowing down anything in their path. "We got a ship to take down!"

"Every time Fixer!" Scorch shouted. "Why do you always get in the way of our fun?"

Jordan, meanwhile, was having the time of his life as he duked it out with a trio of Elites, a Major and two Minors. He ducked the punch of one of the Minors, and twirled around kicking the large foe off of his feet forcing him to the ground. He then took his double-bladed

Vibrosword and stabbed the Elite right into the torso and gave a quick jerk and the Elite passed from this life to the next.

He pulled the sword out, and swung it around just in time to slice into the second Elite Minor, tearing past his personal shields and cutting him in half. Jordan then twirled his blade over his head as he faced the Elite Major, and then got into a reverse-grip with his sword. He then spoke with a bit of mockery in his tone.

"Name's Jordan and there are few who can fight me," he thumbed his helmet where his nose was located behind it, "Think you're one of them?"

"I am Fal'Lodamee and I will find great honor in your defeat and silence."

The Major growled and roared at the challenge as he drew out his Energy Sword. Jordan grinned behind his helmet as the two began to circle one another. Then the Elite made the first move with a jump to add force to a downward slash, which Jordan dodged by skidding left, but saw the Elite had closed the distance, feinting with the first attack, he took a swipe at Jordan, but Jordan dodged it again. The Major again closed and then tried another swipe, but Jordan caught the attack with his sword, and then brought his leg up to kick the Elite away. The Elite bounced back on his feet and cradled his abdomen a bit, growling in annoyance and slight pain.

Jordan pressed his attack, but the Elite recovered quickly as he rolled to the side, missing the strike from Jordan. He then counter-attacked with an upwards thrust with his sword, but missed Jordan who barely dodged at all. However Fal did manage to land a strike on both Jordan's helmet, shattering the visor open and cutting open part of the faceplate as well as hitting the double-bladed sword in the middle, slicing it in half and throwing Jordan momentarily off balance as he fell back and rolled to regain his stance.

Jordan looked at his now two blades, eyes wide before his eyes narrowed as he glared at the Elite Major, "Okay..." Jordan stated neutrally as his glare intensified, "Now I'm pissed!" He shouted as he stepped up his attack, now using his now two swords striking at the Elite.

Though Fal managed to catch many of his attacks surprised that the weapon still worked at all, Jordan continued to attack, draining his shields more bit by bit. Until Jordan managed to disarm the Elite...

Literally disarmed Fal, by cutting off his sword arm, causing the Elite to howl in pain, which would have been short-lived as Jordan had been readying to stab the Elite in the chest with both of his blades, but a hail of fire showed that reinforcements arrived for the besieged defenders and the attackers had to take shelter around bends, behind corners and deployed shield barriers, and inside of Bubble Shields. Though not all of the UNSC and Mando'a were quick enough to find cover or were simply caught too exposed to get to any form of shelter.

The incoming fire suppressed the combined boarding force, much to the UNSC troopers' surprise as the Covenant had never tried such tactics in the past. Grunts and Jackals shot forth, the Jackals using their

shields to block the weak return fire and shield the Grunts as they dragged off the living back behind cover. A few Brutes even charged forward, leaping over the Jackals to hurl Spike and Fire Grenades and then retreat behind cover of their allies to safety.

"Dammit!" gripped one of the \_Spirit of Fire\_'s shocktroopers, "This \_is \_new!"

"Tell me about it!" complained a shocktrooper from the \_Robin Hood\_, "This is a first for us as well!"

Thel'Lodamee held his younger brother, helping him up against a wall as the Brutes continued to suppress the UNSC and Mando'a soldiers. The older Sanghelli looked at his brother's severed arm, a Grunt had grabbed and brought it along with Fal's sword. Thel became convinced, holding his brother that changes were needed, the war had brought to light the truth of the flaws plaguing not only the Sanghelli, but also the Covenant as a whole.

"Use all grenades on my command!" Thel shouted as he picked up his brother and the severed arm, "NOW!" he shouted and all grenades on hand were being tossed at the combined invaders and Thel then issued an order that left a sour taste in his mouth and colored his tone as he ordered, "RETREAT! Fallback to new defensive lines!"

The Covenant troops did just that and in the few short, but frantic moments since they started firing on their enemy, the defenders pulled back to regroup and establish new defensive lines.

It was a bitter taste of defeat, but the Covenant warriors were aware that if they tried to fight, all they would succeed in is to die for no real gain. So doing as told, they withdrew, keeping up a heavy barrage of fire and grenades, but their opponents had no desire for a quick and pointless death. So the Covenant troops withdrew in good order and together unmolested.

Once the last grenade detonated and the last shot bounced harmlessly off a Bubble Shield, Jordan sighed as he stood up, surveying the passageways before him briefly before nodding that the Covenant had indeed withdrawn.

He then looked at his damaged swords and muttered, "Damn... Now I gotta get a new one... \_again,\_" he said, and was about to move on until he noticed the Energy Sword still grasped by a dead Elite's severed hand along with another one on its belt.

Jordan grabbed the weapons and held one in each hand, activating them showing their blue curved blades. "Hmm..." He said, as he then put one away and grabbed one of the halves of the sword, and compared them. "Eh, why the hell not?" He said rhetorically as he put away his swords and grabbed a Energy Sword in each hand. "They'll do for now." He then put the swords away, but before he could press forward his eye caught a Grunt who had both been left behind and was trying to run away, while blaster bolts and bullets flew all around him and the alien screaming.

"THEY'RE DEMONS! THEY'RE DE-, "

-SHINK!-

The Grunt was silenced as Jordan sliced the Grunt's face and the diminutive alien fell forward, dead.

"Annoying little bugger," Jordan said, then deactivated the Energy sword he used. He then looked to his left and he saw several ODST's who stopped fighting, and were gawking at him.

"What are you looking at?" Jordan asked angrily, "Come on! We got wounded who need help, a ship to take, a commander to kill, and I'm not getting paid for just standing around! Come on!" He then put away his other sword and drew his DC-15A as he contacted the Clone Advisor that was issuing orders.

The Clone's helmeted visage appeared immediately and before Jordan could speak, the Clone did, \_"Jordan what the kiff happened in your sector?" \_Jordan blinked a couple of times as the Advisor continued, \_"We've got reports of heavy casualties and Mandalore wants a report now!" \_

"Damn Covies copied some of our tactics and finally used them against us," an ODST officer walked over and the Advisor turned his attention to the man, "Really caught us by surprise."

"\_Fierfark,"\_ the Clone cursed,\_ "We've gotten similar reports from other teams, luckily, no dead have been reported by anyone, but I'm a bit surprised of that and I really wish we had a couple more Jedi around." \_

"How bad?" Jordan inquired as he accepted a new helmet from a Clone Trooper who wouldn't be needing it for a while, lucky him.

"\_Could be a lot worse obviously, but so far so good and we've made contact with troops from the \_Robin Hood\_, " \_the Advisor quickly brought the leaders of Jordan's group up to speed on events, \_"So once your wounded are secure, you are to proceed as planned, but are heavily cautioned to be careful. Who knows what other traps lay in wait for you all." \_

"Lucky us," a female shocktrooper from the sloop, \_UNSC Fear to Tread,\_ stated as the Clone Advisor vanished in a burst of static, "So what's behind Door Number One?" she sarcastically pointed to a sealed hatch.

"Let's find out," a Spartan said as she aimed her Spartan Laser at the impediment.

"Spartans!" a Spartan officer called out and the others turned to him, "Let's sprint this!"

"HOO!" they called out as Jordan smirked behind his new helmet.

"You all know the drill!" he shouted in Mandalorian, "Dragoons on me!"

"Helljumpers what's our saying!" a Helljumper officer shouted to her ODSTs.

"Feet first through Hell!" they responded, stacking up behind the others weapons raised and ready.

The Spartan fired her laser and the hatchway was blasted clear as the assault forces charged through, met by scattered resistance that decided to stick to traditional Covenant tactics.

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\_\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\_

\_\*\*With the other Group\*\*\_

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Fordo bashed the skull of a Jackal with the buttstock of his DC-15A rifle, forcing it to the ground as he slammed his foot on his back, and fired two rounds into his skull, killing it. "Move up!" He called to the rest of his men, including the other nine members of the Muunilist 10. The Mando'ade and ODST Forces charged forward, firing their respective weapons at the Covenant troops in front of them as they fell back.

"Damn! These guys sure know how to fight aliens!" shouted one ODST from the \_Spirit\_ as he shot a Grunt through his gas mask, igniting the gas, causing his face to blow up.

"I hear ya! Especially \_those\_ guys!" a squadmate agreed as he pointed to the ARC Troopers who were ripping a group of Jackals a new asshole, "Their like Spartans yet...their not!"

Then two Spartans sprinted by, aiming for a group of Brutes. The first Spartan in blue and white Arctic Camo colored Operator MJOLNIR Armor slide under one Brute Major, attaching a plasma grenade that promptly blew up the Major and three other Brute Minors, before doing a one handed handstand in order to avoid a Brute Chieftains Gravity Hammer. The Spartan struck the Chieftain in the head with a powerful kick and then he pushed off with both his hands wrapping his legs around the Brute's neck and snapping his neck. The Brute fell dead to the ground like a sack of potatoes.

The other Spartan, a female, in blue and red trimmed armor with a black visor C-Variant of of the MJOLNIR Armor slammed her armored right fist into another Chieftain's armor. The Chieftain was hit with such force as to bend over and be lifted off the deck. An explosion then occurred that split the Chieftain in two with very messy results.

The two Shocktroopers felt their jaws hit the bottom of the inside of their helmets. That was a first that they had ever seen that done. Then the Spartan repeated the attack, but this time n the head of a Hunter while its bond brother was killed by a Spartan Laser. The two's sergeant then stomped over to them and slapped them both on the back of the helmet.

"Quit gawking and start shooting you two!" The Squad Sergeant shouted as he brought up his shotgun and fired his M90 into a Skirmisher, splattering the alien all over the walls, "Their good, but don't let'em hog the glory! Show them what the Shocktroopers can do!"

"Sir yes sir!" They shouted as they pressed their attack.

Meanwhile Scout deflected a few Plasma Rounds with her Lightsaber. "Master, do you read me?" She asked on her communicator.

There were the sounds of blaster fire and the sound of a lightsaber swinging before she heard a reply. "\_Sorry, Ryu Hisanaga is not available at the time being.\_" A voice said. "\_Please leave a message after the tone.\_"

Scout rolled her eyes. "Very funny Master." She said. "Where are you?"

"\_Almost at the Bridge on this bucket,\_" he replied, "\_We'll probably reach it at the same time.\_"

Scout nodded in the affirmative, "Copy that Master. See you there!" she cut the link and then proceeded to eviscerate then decapitate a Brute Minor.

"Alright everyone! Let's hurry up and get through these guys!" She shouted over the weapons fire as she blocked more plasma shots heading toward her.

"Yes, Ma'am!" Fordo acknowledged, and then blasted a trio of Grunts with his blaster pistols, "You heard the Lady! Let's get to it!"

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\_\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\_

\_\*\*On the Surface of Harvest\*\*\_

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Another Wraith Tank Exploded from the combined fire from PLX-1 Missile Launchers and Saber-class Fighter Tanks. The battle for the old Alpha Base was growing more and more intense as additional Covenant vehicles continued to deploy and attack the base and that was despite the best efforts of UNSC troops trying to get to them and continuous bombing by Shortswords. The good news was that the Covenant had abandoned the idea of airlifting them in to attack due to their heavy loss of dropships. The bad news was that they were now setting up a staging area a few clicks from their position, near the ruins of two battered bases and nearby some alien ruins further out from there.

Zack was firing his DC-15A Blaster Rifle from his position from above, crouched down behind some cover killing a few Suicide Grunts, "Fierfark, these guys are crazy!" Zack shouted over the din of battle, "Their charging in at us, and they don't even care how many of them get killed!"

As he said this another Grunt fell to his DC-15A and hitting the snow covered ground like a lead weight.

"I agree with you Zack!" shouted Serra as she deflected a few Plasma bolts, then used the Force to lift a man sized piece of rock and hurl it at the Covenant troops crushing a few Grunts and Jackals, "But we have to hold this position until reinforcements arrive!"

"Yes ma'am- Incoming!" He shouted as a Wraith fired its Plasma Mortar and the shot heading straight for them. Zack reacted first, and tackled Serra away just in time to avoid the blast of blue light, forcing them to the ground, as the other troopers with them also managed to avoid the last, but were tossed about like children's toys.

"You alright?" He asked as they got back to their feet.

Serra nodded "Yeah, I'm fine," she replied then quickly spun, activating her lightsaber and cutting down four Brute Stalkers in one fluid motion, their blood splashing and exposing their fellows for a torrent of blaster bolts.

"But we need to take out those Wraiths on the ridge," they both watched another ball of blue light crash down, short of a strongpoint to their left, "or they'll keep tearing us apart."

Zack nodded, knowing that a little while ago the Covenant had set up a pair of Wraith Motor Tanks on a nearby Ridge, and have been bombarding their position ever since. "None of our weapons can reach out to where they are, and we have no air support." He said. "As much as I agree, we can't do-"

"Sir!" Sparks called out urgently as the Clone ran up to him, ducking under the plasma fire sent his way, "I just got word! Their sending us some support!"

Zack and Serra blinked in surprise "Who is it?" Serra asked.

"The UNSC guys," both blinked at Sparks, "The guys who used this base before we occupied it and whose troops have been having a Sith's Blood hard time getting to us and their bombers have been pounding away on the Covenant with air strike," Sparks gave them a quick brief as a Shortsword shot by overhead to crash land inside the base perimeter, the pilots barely ejecting in time to float down on parachutes right next to the main buildings, "A ship called the \_Spirit of Fire \_had already sent down a few dropships loaded with troops, supplies, and something called a 'Base Starter' to help us out, but Covenant Double-A has kept them at bay up until just a short while ago."

Behind his helmet, Zack's eyes widen a little, but then he grinned, "It looks like our day is about to go from bad to interesting," the Clone Commander said, and Serra looked at him with a smirk.

"It sure is, but now's not the time to think about it," Serra immediately went back into 'Commander's Mode' and begin to issue orders, "Continue giving our friends a nice shot of lasers, Zack."

The Clone grinned as he armed his Rifle again. "Yes Ma'am!" He said as he turned to Sparks "When you get in contact with them again, see if you can get them to give me an Air Strike on those Wraiths. They've been pounding on our position for long enough."

"That's just it!" Sparks pointed as the Wraiths on ridge line suddenly came under fire from long range fire, "They can't spare many more bombers, most need to rearm, but they brought up long range artillery!"

"They can't cover the whole area around us though," Serra noted as the shots were falling far short of other artillery positions.

"They're actually shelling the enemy's forward base with really, really long range artillery, but yeah they can't," Sparks reported and in the distance, bright flashes of blue light and black bits could be seen shooting up into the sky, "They got a ground force of some hundred or so vehicles now breaking through, but they need to wait for air support before they can make a mad dash with all their forces to us."

"But we're getting reinforcements right?" Zack inquired and Sparks nodded, "How much?"

"Around fifty or so vehicles, the enemy's got a few ships that's giving them grief, but the real problem is some fixed AA platforms," a nearby explosion dumped snow and dirt on the three, "But they got special forces working on that and hopefully we can get some ship support as well."

"Now that's good news when it comes," Zack stated as he popped up and gunned down an Elite Ultra that had tried rushing the line.

"As soon as those AA platforms are off line call in air support and lots of it!" Serra ordered as she peaked over the wall she was behind and barely got her head back into cover, a flash of continuous energy accompanied by a sound like shredding metal passing right through where her head had been milliseconds earlier.

A green bolt shot out back in the direction the shot had come from and the Clone Sniper reported a kill.

Sparks grinned and nodded, "Yes sir!" he then left, as Zack continued to pour heavy fire into the Covenant.

Serra reactivated her lightsabers and had a grin on her face.

"I think it's time I get a little personal here," she said and then took off like a bullet before Zack could say anything. The Clone gave a sigh at his Commander's head-strongness, but grinned all the same.

"Same old Serra," he commented before opening fire with his DC-15A.

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\*\*\_Bridge of the\_ Spirit of Fire\*\*

\_\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_\_

"Captain, more enemy reinforcements have jumped into local space," Serina reported and Captain Cutter sighed as he ran a hand over his face.

"How many does that make Serina?" he asked tiredly as he was already forming plans in his head as he observed the battle on the holomap table.

"The fourth time that enemy reinforcements have jumped in and according to Winterfall this is the enemy's entire local fleet at this point," the AI responded even as UNSC sloops launched a massive wolf pack attack on the Covenant 'lightweights.'

"That's how many ships we've engaged?" Cutter was feeling the strain, this was a battle the \_Spirit of Fire\_ wasn't meant for, but she was making the smaller ships have a smaller travel time between resupply and the fighting.

"Seventy-four ships altogether," Serina was beginning to look as haggard as Cutter felt, "But with losses suffered, we've only about forty-six ships in front of us," then the \_Spirit\_'s MAC fired, "Make that forty-four, we just sank a \_CPV\_-class Destroyer with its shields down and the Mandalorians sank a light cruiser."

"If I'm not mistaken, we've never fought these numbers before," Cutter remarked as he glanced up and out into space, but suddenly spotted two Covenant ships he didn't recognize suddenly appear from the debris field and move to flank the \_Spirit\_ on both sides, "DECK CANNONS NOW SERINA!"

"AYE, AYE CAPTAIN!" the AI immediately alerted the CAP to the danger and the two Covenant ships and the \_Spirit of Fire\_ began trading broadsides.

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\_\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\_

\_\*\*Pelican Dropship En-Route to  
Surface\*\*\_

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"Mando'ade forces in Alpha Base, this is Bravo 427, do you receive me?" the pilot of the Pelican asked as her formation of dropships moved through Harvest's atmosphere after a rendezvous with forces from Winterfall.

All in all, there were 35 D77-TC Pelicans, 17 D96-TCE Albatrosses, 6 AC-220 Vultures, and 4 Combat Pods Mark III in the formation with an escort of 20 GA-TL1 Longswords and 30 B-65 Shortswords. This flight had been put together in the hopes that they could penetrate the developing Covenant Air Defense Enforcement Zone, or ADEZ for short. The Covenant would be relying on their massive AA Platforms, so it was hoped that a group of small, nimble craft just might break through their defense screen.

At the same time, another force was inbound to Alpha Base via Tilt Rotor Aviation. This included the venerable UH-144 Falcon and its new, bigger sisters, the UH-164 Eagle and AH-165 Talon Gunships. That group had an escort of 40 of the long storied AV-14 Hornet, 38 of the new and finally working AV-22 Sparrowhawk, and for fixed wing support, 32 A-44 Skyhawk Strike Fighters. This group would be flying low and fast, with the Skyhawks playing the role of Wild Weasels to allow the rotor and VTOL birds to break through with minimal problems.

At least that was the plan.

"\_This is Sparks, we read you loud and clear Bravo 427,\_" came the immediate reply, "\_Glad to see you made it despite the AA fire," \_a near explosion on Sparks' position caused some static, but he continued,\_"My commander was wondering if you could perform an air strike on a few Wraith Tanks on a nearby ridge that's just outside your artillery's range before you land," \_another explosion in the background,\_"They've been pounding the kiff out of our position, and we can't get them either, over?\_"

The pilot grinned "Say no more, Sparks, just tell us the range and..." she chuckled as the dropships came into air and began to evade the heavy Plasma Flak as the Longswords peeled off for a dogfight with enemy fighters, "We'll bring the pain. Hang tight."

"\_Thanks Bravo 427! Range is North 874 meters, East 35 something meters, they're located on top of the ridge with slightly fresh killed dropships still burning blue and some snow covered wrecks that have been there for a while, Sparks out!" \_with that he cut the transmission and the Pilot contacted the Shortswords.

"You ladies and gentlemen hear that?" she asked the group as they all continued to evade.

"\_Slugger Lead confirms," \_the Spirit of Fire pilot check her map and saw that she had bombed that same ridge back in 2531 and her Slugger Squadron was the responsible party for those old wrecks, "\_Bombed that ridge the last we were here,"\_ several Slugger pilots snarled in memory at what those Wraiths had been up to back then, "\_So this time we're make sure to make a point of denying that ridge once and for all to the Covenant."\_

"Bravo 427 copies that, good luck with that group of Wraiths," switching over to the transports with her, the pilot spoke again, "Alright, listen up! We got some Wraiths on a nearby ridge keeping our new friends pinned down! So the Sluggers are going to take them out before we land, but keep your eyes open for fighters, friendlies, and anything our bombers miss," she ordered and she received numerous replies in the affirmative at that, "Good, now let's get some boots on the ground!"

As the UNSC dropships dove in hard for the approach, they could easily make out the Wraiths raining Plasma Bombs down onto the base as the Shortswords of Slugger Squadron broke off and went for both the Wraiths and any other targets of opportunity.

"Locust spotted at Area OB-N42," the copilot reported.

"Weapons," spoke the pilot.

"Weapons clear," Bravo 427's crew chief reported.

"Copy that," the gunner replied as he pressed the control buttons for the various weapons.

"Weapons free," the pilot stated and the Pelican's gunner fired a swarm of ANVIL Rockets at the Locusts.

The Covenant walkers didn't stand a chance as the missiles blasted

through their armor, and became nothing more than heaps of twisted metal just as the Sluggers finished pushing the Covenant off the ridge once and for all, "Targets down Sparks!" the female pilot reported, "Proceeding to LZ."

"Copy that, Bravo 247! Thank the bomber pilots for the airstrike!" Sparks happily replied back as the Pelicans and Albatrosses touched down and began unloading the troops and vehicles as the Pods landed and dropped off the Base Starters before taking off again and landing in a clear area off to the side of the base, being sure to keep some space between them.

Then the Vultures arrived over the base. The big gunships immediately going to work against the Covenant. Two of them spotting a transport type Scarab trying to amble up to the base with an escort of Assault Scarabs and a group of Locust. The entire group of Vultures turned all their heavy firepower onto the approaching threat and when the smoke cleared and the dust settled, only one Assault Scarab was left and it was finished off by a Shortsword.

"Marines away!" Bravo 247 said and after the last Marine left her transport she piloted it to a spot to put down and wait for orders. As the other Transports unloaded their troops and moved to park themselves somewhere, Zack took the chance to stop fighting, grab a drink and bite, and hurried towards them to greet their reinforcements. He then noticed one of the figures that stepped out of the transports stood out, a large green-armored with red stripes figure with a gold visor and a large green weapon on his back, and in his hand was what looked like one of the Shotgun's Zack found in the base's armory.

Zack then saw another, this time in Arctic Camo blue and white hope out the back of another of the dropship, followed by others. They acknowledged the sage green colored one, but what really got Zack's attention about the second bunch was that several carried really big weapons that looked more suited to being armored vehicle mounted and connected to cords and some sort of metallic chain link. After swiping two fingers across their visors, the group of heavily armored soldiers moved out to join the line and apparently await orders.

"Which of you are in charge?" Zack asked once he reached them, though he already had a feeling...

As expected, the green armored one stepped forward "Me, Spartan-092 of the Spirit of Fire group," the big guy said, "And you are?"

"Commander Zack, Second-in-Command of the 18th Heavy Assault Battalion," Zack replied as he glanced over to the others that seemed to have a leader awaiting their turn, "Thanks for joining us down here..." he trailed off, no idea who the guy really was, "You got a name besides what you just said?"

"I do, but we Spartans don't normally allow outsiders to our group to know our names," the Spartan stated and Zack nodded, knowing quite a few Clones who were like that, heck even Alpha took time to use his name.

"I can go with that," Jerome then looked at the fight and that's when

he saw Serra going toe-to-toe with an Elite Zealot. She was fighting it, melee combat using a weapon that reminded him of a Covenant Energy Sword, only each sword she had only used one blade per sword, and was straight unlike the Covenant version that had two curved blades.

Jerome watched in surprise, and a hint of respect as the single woman managed to fight one-on-one with a Covenant Elite and a Zealot-class no less. A feat that, until just now, only Spartans could lay claim too. The Zealots were simply too dangerous for the average trooper to hope to fight equally.

"Who is that?" he asked, pointing at the woman.

"Ah, \_that \_would be my CO, Serra Keto." Zack said with a fond tone in response, "She's a bit headstrong at times, but she knows what she's doing."

For a few moments, the mix of UNSC troopers and even the Spartans watched her fight the alien until she delivered the killing blow, cutting its head clean off in one fluid motion one might expect of a dancer. She then turned around after checking for anymore enemies and noticed the UNSC forces, and sprinted towards them. "Are these the UNSC Forces?" She asked once she reached them, the looks Marines and soldiers were giving were that of surprise and respect.

"Yes ma'am!" Zack confirmed and motioned to Jerome, "This is Spartan-092 and his fellow Spartans, but don't ask names, they're like some of the boys like that, and he's in charge of them," Serra looked at the 'lesser' armored UNSC troops that Zack indicated and then she looked at the almost 7 foot tall Spartan and couldn't help but feel a bit intimidated.

"Spartan-079," one of the other Spartans, in stock armor with just a basic loadout of grenades, a BR-55 Battle Rifle, and a pair of M7 Submachine Guns magnetically locked on his thighs, "I'm in command of the group from Winterfall until the actual commander shows up."

Blinking in surprise as she looked at the Winterfall troops and noted how their armor and weapons were much better looking, yet the eeriness of the likeness to Mando'a armor was a bit of a shock to her, but Serra quickly regained herself and made introductions, "Serra Keto, Jedi Knight and Commander of the 18th Heavy Assault Battalion," She introduced herself. "Nice to get some help down here, we were beginning to wonder if we were all on our own until Ryu took care of the fleet upstairs."

"It's our job to fight the Covenant and kick them off Harvest," Spartan-092 stated firmly with conviction, "What's the situation down here?"

Serra sighed and was glad to have ready to go allies, "Those Covenant soldiers showed up a while ago, attacking a Scouting Party I was part of," she spoke, and shivered at the memory of the suddenness of the ambush, "Myself and one of the troopers under my command managed to avoid being killed thanks to some help Zack had sent, and that was about then the Covenant fleet arrived, and sent dropships down here. They stopped airlifting their troops in when they found out the hard way that our AT-TE's Mass Driver Cannons tore through their ship's

armor like a laser knife through paper," a number of UNSC personnel chuckled at that, the Covenant could be slow learners, "and dropped their troops off at some strange structures a few kilometers from here," then she turned to look at a looming shape that was too close for comfort, "Just recently that \_CCS\_-Class Battlecruiser and those two Corvettes showed up and started deploying even more troops, and have been coming in non-stop. We have no way to counter-attack them since there is only one way in or out of here, and the Covenant are using it for their attack."

"Ma'am, uhh, I think I may have an Idea," one of the Marines spoke up. Serra rose an eyebrow at him, and noticed his patch that said 'Kirkwood N.T.'

"What is it?" She asked kindly, this was their planet and base after all.

"Well, I was here during the last time the \_Spirit \_was at Harvest fifteen years ago," he began as he had her attention, "I remember that Sergeant Forge took a section of Warthogs through that way," he then turned and pointed at a small opening to the left of the base where a small gateway sat, "It was small and led to the old weather observation posts out that way until the Covenant blew them up and wrecked the bridges," he then turned pointed at snow cover debris that could be seen in the distance, "Then the UNSC Prophecy was self destructed up in space, some of the debris from the forward section crashed down over there, lifting and moving closer this side of the canyon," he then turned back to Serra, "The result was a one-way trip across because of the jump at the end of the end of the road, but back then he used it to flank the Covenant from behind, allowing the others to attack from in front. We might still be able to use it to flank the Covenant."

Serra nodded "Sounds good," She said after hearing that, "But we still need to take out that Battlecruiser, and I don't have any firepower that can-

"We do," Jerome said as he picked up a small football-sized object, "This is a Medium Fusion Destructive Device or MFDD or Mike-Foxtrot-Delta-Delta Tactical Nuclear Weapon and it is powerful enough to kill that Cruiser, but the catch is someone has to go up the ship's Grav lift and toss it inside on a timed detonator."

"Well, it's a plan at least," Serra said, looking less than thrilled at the weapon that was round, cylindrical, and painted black with a grey front and yellow control pad, before turning to Zack. "Zack, you keep holding off against the Covenant Forces with our main force," she told the Clone, "I'll go with Spartan-092 here with some of his Marines and a few of our best troops to get behind the Covenant and destroy that Cruiser."

Before Zack could respond, the sound of a lot of somethings approaching was heard and the group looked to see the forces flying in on air breathers had finally shown up. The UNSC tilt rotors and their escorts broke through as a new kind of fighter shot by over head. The land based aerial reinforcements had arrived and quickly drove for the base, dodging some Type-52 AAA on the way in, though the Skyhawks quickly silenced those guns.

"About time," muttered Spartan-079, "Those have our commander aboard," then one of the Eagles was hit and spun in for a crash landing not far from the base perimeter that some AT-TE's began advancing as a few more whirly birds went down to Covenant anti-air, "Hopefully."

Shaking her head, Serra turned back to Zack, "Greet the reinforcements and let them know where we're weakest and work out a new defensive plan and get ready to advance," she took a quick breath before she continued, "We'll take a few Saber Fighter Tanks, BARC Speeders, and such to get there fast."

Zack nodded in understanding, "Understood, ma'am and may the Force be with you," Serra grinned softly at her Clone Counterpart.

"You as well, Zack," she said and turned back to the Spartan, "Shall we Spartan?" she asked and he nodded.

"Lead the way," he replied and Serra lead them to the Mandalorian Vehicle Depot.

The group from the Spirit of Fire was joined by specially selected Clones and Mando'a as they walked to the depot. A number of UNSC vehicles and even Cyclops Work Units now moved about as D82-EST Dart transports brought in supplies to the newly activated as well as the older supply pads. Six M130 Fox Self Propelled Artillery Howitzers rumbled by to set themselves up under the direction of a Clone Trooper next to a completed Firebase as a couple of squadrons of SP42 Cobras rolled forward to take up defensive positions in front of the base.

They soon arrived at the Mando'a Vehicle Depot where several vehicles awaited them. This included six TX-130 \_Saber-\_class Fighter Tanks, a few BARC Speeders, and in addition to those, were four UNSC Warthogs they managed to salvage and repair when the Mando'ade first arrived. These particular Warthogs were all armed with M41 Chain Guns and painted in Arctic Camouflage marking them as M864 A models, which were simply winterized, arctic ready M12 LRVs.

The Clones and Serra boarded the Fighter Tanks and speeders while a few of the UNSC Forces boarded the Warthogs and rode inside of the tanks. "Let's ride!" Serra called out from her tank as she closed the hatch, and sped forward. Jerome, who was driving one of the Warthogs, nodded as he and the others followed her down the passageway.

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\_\*\*Covenant Cruiser\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

Douglas-042 lead his troops forward as they engaged the Covenant defenders. From what a Winterfall Marine had told him, it was extremely rare to see Brutes and Elites on the same ship. Even rarer for them to be operating as a cohesive unit.

Flanked by two SPARTAN-IIIs Douglas had led the charge into the ship. They soon met up with the Mandalorian troopers. Together they had made good time and soon they were standing at the hatch that would

let them into the bridge.

Douglas had signaled a breaching charge to be placed when the hatch suddenly opened up and there in front of them was the Shipmaster. It was a Brute who promptly collapsed dead, behind the Brute stood a team of battered Elites with green pauldrons on their shoulders.

"That was harder than it looks," the Ultra in the team stated, before turning to Douglas, "Times have changed, this ship is now under your fleet's command."

"What the?" a Marine shouted from the back.

The Ultra turned to him and spoke, "We're what is left of those who had once questioned the Prophets and for that we were branded as Heretics and slain to almost the last," the Ultra shook his head, "I am weary of half truths and outright lies, so I shall find my own path now."

And with that he and his fellows stepped back and allowed the combined boarding force to simply come onto the bridge.

"The Pathseeker is now your's to command," the Ultra stated with a slight bow and outstretching of his arm.

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**\*\*\_Back aboard the Purity of Faith\*\***

\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

Ryu sliced the arms off of another Elite, this one a Ranger, just before stabbing his lightsabers into his torso, sending the Elite to the ground in a heap. He and his group were almost at the bridge, he could tell because the resistance of enemy troops was growing stronger and larger as he and the others moved forward towards the center of the ship. This would normally have been a problem, but they had met up with some units from the Robin Hood, including one of Winterfall's leaders, Spartan-023.

The red and black MJOLNIR C-variant clad woman used an orange visor and could be seen up close and personal with the Covenant soldiers. She used some kind of weapon he had been told was called a 'Knuckle Bomb.' As far as he could figure, it was some kind of shape charge like explosive punch with plenty of force behind it as it had been used to kill even Hunters, though admittedly, where their armor wasn't the best.

Now though, the woman was armed with a shotgun that she used to take out Covenant Drones like they were practice targets on the range.

"We're almost there! Just a little bit more!" Ryu said as he grabbed another Elite's arm that was in a downward swing and then stabbed the alien through the head killing it instantly.

"You are very good. For a human," said a new voice in a very deep tone, though it was laced with respect, Ryu knew what it meant and

turned to see a group of Elites in black, purple, and dark red armor just begin to appear out of thin air.

Ryu noted it was the leader in the front with black armor on that with the most markings on it. The helmet also stood out, with a head crest actually on the front of the helmet shaped like a crescent with a four point star in the middle. The Elite seemed to lazily look over the assembled UNSC troopers and Mando'a until his eyes landed on both Alice and Daisy.

"I was beginning to wonder if Humans, besides the Spartans," the leader indicated a small knot of Spartans, "could stand up against a Sangheili Warrior in one-on-one combat."

"If Forge was here you wouldn't be so damn cocky bastard!" one of the \_Spirit of Fire\_'s Marines shouted at the Elite and the Covenant warrior looked lazily at the Marine before cocking his head to the side.

"Forge," he said, trying the name, "Forge, Forge," he repeated as though the name was familiar and then, "Ah yes! Your Sergeant John Forge was it?" the Elite swung his head back in forth in a gesture that was clearly the universal sign of trying to remember something, "Ah! There is the memory, 'Let's settle this between man and freak,'" the Elite chuckled, "His words upon first meeting the Arbiter."

Several growls were the answer from the \_Spirit of Fire \_Marines and ODSTs.

"I always wondered what had happened to him," the Elite continued, "Tell me," he looked at Alice, "How did his fight go with the Arbiter and what became of him?"

Alice was started somewhat, surprised, but then remembered that a lot of Elites would stop and chat briefly with Humans they thought worthy opponents or speak of their fights with them.

"Your Arbiter got cocky when he thought he had won," Alice began, "But in the end, failed to realize that Forge still had his combat knife to stick him in the throat in order to be freed and to disable his opponent."

"Disable you say?" Naza looked curious, as did the Elites behind him, "What happened next that killed Ripa 'Moramee?"

Alice nodded and filed the name away for later reports, "Forge picked up his Energy Sword and ran it through him with the closing remark," here she played the record of what happened.

"\_And for the record! I would have kicked your ass the first time if the lady hadn't stopped me!\_"

Several of the Elites actually applauded the late NCO's words while a few others made sounds of approval. Clearly, to them, Sergeant John Forge would have been a worthy foe as he was clearly a strong warrior.

"To think that one who betrayed his clan out of arrogance should die because of it," the Elite chuckled and then grew sober, "What of

Sergeant Forge?"

Some were taken aback by the formal way that their opponent, a hated enemy, had referred to late UNSC leatherneck, but Alice never the less answered, "He stayed behind to destroy the docked fleet of ancient warships and to ensure that we could escape as well."

"That explains much," the Elite nodded his head solemnly and his SpecOps warriors did the same, "Such a loss, a dream fight if he was that skilled, may he know peace."

Then the Elite and his men brought up their weapons, "Now is the time for battle, prepare yourselves!"

Several of the Marines, Mando'a, and Alice raised their weapons, but Ryu raised his hand to stop them.

"Thank you for honoring a fallen hero," he said and then indicated crest wearing Elite, "And you are...?"

"Naza Wrenuee', of the Covenant Special Operations Brigade onboard the Purity of Faith," the Elite responded at once, "My Superior wishes for me to challenge you, to see your skills in combat against one of his Teams. Do you accept this challenge?"

Ryu looked at the Elite before him, "Are there any rules to this challenge?" He asked.

"Simply that you only use your hands, feet, and your melee weapons." Naza said. "No Ranged weapons like pistols or rifles, or those strange powers I have seen you use."

One of the Mandalorians gave a cry of laughter, "That sounds like a typical day in the Dueling Circle!"

"Agreed," a Clone trooper agreed, "Sounds like we're not the only ones with a good love for dueling in the truest sense."

Behind his helmet, Ryu grinned "Then I accept your Challenge, Naza Wrenuee." He said, but Alice was a bit worried.

"Sir, is this wise?" she asked. "We really should-"

"I can handle this, 103," Ryu interrupted her with a reassuring tone, "Besides..." Ryu looked Naza straight in the eye as he stepped forward, "It goes against Mandalorian Honor to not accept a challenge like this and I can see in this guys eyes..." Ryu took his stance, "This will be a very interesting fight to have."

Alice was about to try again, but a hand on her shoulder made her look around and saw Calista standing there, "Trust me, it's pointless to get him to think otherwise," she said, but there was a tone of mischievous there, "I'm his wife, so I should know."

Alice looked at her for a moment, before sighing at letting the Mand'alor fight. Ryu removed his helmet, letting it fall to the floor. The Elite did the same, removing his own helmet letting it clatter to the ground. He then reached for his belt and drew two Energy Swords, and activated them.

Ryu responded in kind as he activated his own gauntlet mounted sabers, "You know Naza, I come to believe your species' energy swords behave the same way as my lightsabers," said and he swore he saw the Sangheili grin.

"My thoughts exactly, Mand'alor," Naza said and then entered a fighting stance, "Let us test that theory shall we?"

"I shall oversee and officiate this Duel then," Daisy stated, this reminded her of the Spartans of Ancient Greece nearly 3,000 years ago, "I've checked about the rules and know enough of Sanghelli Duels that they are quite similar not only to Mando'a Duels, but also those of our ancient namesake, the Spartans of the City State of Sparta."

The warriors merely nodded as both sides watched. In modern warfare, this kind of action was nearly unheard of and to see such a long lost way of war... it was thrilling to say the least.

"Combatants ready?" she called out, her own helmet removed as she let it drop and both warriors nodded, "FIGHT!"

Ryu held his sabers at his sides in what seemed to be a relaxed posture as he eyed Naza. To the trained eye however his muscles were coiled and ready to move in an instant as he waited for an opening. It happened in an instant, Ryu's only indication was a slight twitch of Naza's foot as Daisy's falling helmet hit the deck plate just as the Elite leaped forward swinging his Energy Swords straight towards the Mand'alor's neck only to be intercepted by Ryu's gauntlet sabers before kicking Naza in the chest with his booted foot sending the Elite tumbling back letting out a pained wheeze as he rolled out of the way of Ryu's follow up attack.

Ryu pressed on his assault his lightsabers seemed to blur as he hammered away at Naza's defense as the Elite backed away matching Ryu's impressive speed with his own. Then the Elite caught one Lightsaber with one of his swords, parried the other, and then slammed his head into Ryu's own, knocking him back. Naza attempted to follow up, but both his swords were parried, but so were Ryu's Lightsabers as both backed away and began to circle one another.

The warriors on both sides were cheering their fighter on as the two began to trade furious blows as the sound of the magnetic fields meant with hissing and crashing sounds. Vibrating energy hummed through the air as force of the blows were tremendous and powerful. The two jockeying for position to take control of the fight. Daisy kept right with them, making sure both kept to the rules as they fought between one another as she palmed her combat knife for the kill should one break the rules.

Ryu was again parried wide by Naza, but this time, he fell back and rolled, dodging Naza's attack. Then Ryu launched himself from a crouching position to shoulder check Naza in the stomach. The Sanghelli warrior crashed to the plating with a scraping of metal on metal as Ryu backhanded the Elite and tried to trap of his hands, but the Elite counter with a backhand of his own and then a gut busting blow to Ryu's abdomen.

Ryu managed a high kick from his position that struck Naza in the elbow and threw his balance off. Ryu was able to roll away, avoiding

a downward thrust that cut and metal deck plate. Ryu managed to get into another crouch and larger himself forward parrying one sword and trapping the other's arm under his foot and then using it as a springboard to do a spin kick to Naza's face.

Naza was actually sent flipping and spinning by the kick. He crashed to down again onto the plating, but rolled as as Ryu's weapons also melted a pair of holes into the decking. Naza was able to get a roundhouse kick off, but Ryu was able to get his arms up to defend, but was still knocked back and felt his arms go numb for a few moments.

Naza hadn't pressed his attack as he tried to catch his breath. The same that Ryu was doing as feeling returned to both his arms. Both smirking at the other as they caught their breath and began to once again circle one another.

Daisy followed both, knife still palmed in her hand. Only the \_Spirit of Fire\_'s troopers were nervous that she had it out and was likely willing to use it on even their own ally. They held back though, as it looked like the Mandalorians agreed with the decision.

Then both were at it again. Slashing, thrusting, hacking, swiping, punching, kicking, even headbutting. The two kept at it, moving with all the grace of dancers and the all the skill of predators.

Then, just like how the fight started, it finished with the slightest of cracks in Naza's defense that Ryu quickly exploited catching the Energy Swords in the space between the edges and twisted yanking them out of the grip of the Elite sending them whirling off to the side where both humans and aliens ducked out of the way while Ryu brought his sabers up to the Elite's neck...

"The clear and honorable winner of the duel is Ryu Hisanaga, the Mandalore of all Mandalorians!" Daisy declared, remembering Ryu's place as leader of the Mandalorians, as she slipped her knife away and the UNSC troopers and Mando's warriors cheered their fighter's win.

"My win," Ryu announced calmly as Naza looked at him in shock and surprise, but then chuckled, though he wheezed slightly from injuries and exertion.

"It appears my superior was right, you are indeed powerful," Naza exclaimed, and Ryu looked at him.

"You are as well Naza. Not just by your physical strength, but the spirit as well," Ryu said to him as Naza listened to him, "And I can also sense the Force flowing strongly within you and the rest of your comrades," He motioned to the other SpecOps Elites.

"The Force?" Naza asked, interested by this.

"The Force, simply put as it has been for more than 35,000 years, is a stream of energy that flows through all living beings," Ryu answered not missing how the Elites and UNSC troops seemed to react with surprise at the his stated length of time, "It is the Force that I tap into to perform the powers that you and your comrades have seen me, and my allies use," Ryu then deactivated his lightsabers, and extended his hand to the Elite.

The big alien looked at the hand for a while, before accepting it, and allowing him to help him up. "It is good to see there are humans like the Spartans who have as much Honor as a proud Sangheilli," Naza said.

"Yes, and it is interesting meeting an Alien as skilled as a Mandalorian and follows a similar way no less," Ryu bowed to Naza, surprising both sides, "It has been truly an honor," Ryu said at the end.

Naza seemed to blush, for his race, but only his fellows could make it out and chuckled at his embarrassment, "Thank you as well," Naza returned the bow and the UNSC men and women couldn't help but note how he bowed like some of their own cultures do, "A fight worthy of my family and clan's battle poetry."

Ryu nodded, having an idea as to what it was, as did Daisy and the Spartans, but Ryu then asked a question, "So what will you and your superior do now?"

"What else? Aid you in taking this ship." Naza said, to the shock and surprise of the others and he elaborated for the stunned parties, "My commander has always questioned the war we have had with the Humans for the lack of what it supposedly had done," that set off alarm bells in both UNSC and Mando'a heads, "As well, he has come to loath the Fleet Master's attitude towards all Humans. Seeing you Mand'alor and your soldiers fight convinced him that it was finally time to rise up. The entire Spec Ops Forces on the Purity of Faith will aid your cause, Mand'alor, as well as my commander, Neos 'Tumae. We will take care of the rest of the crew that has not sided with my commander as your forces take the bridge."

Many of the UNSC personnel and even the Spartans gawked at that, while Ryu, the Mandalorians, and the Clones, smirked as said Mand'alor extends his hand and Naza grasps it.

"It's nice to make friends who are not blinded by false mirages," Ryu said wisely, even sagely.

Naza made the Elite equivalent of a smirk and nodded, "And it is nice to make allies, who will not surrender no matter what," he replied, and he turned back to his brother Sangelli. A few moments later, he and the other elites activated their Active Camo, and disappeared.

"...what the fuck just happened?" one of the Spirit's Shocktroopers asked in a state of dumbfoundedness.

"I... I think we just saw that Mandalorian guy beat an Elite SpecOp in one-on-one combat, and then that same Elite just told us he and a part of the crew are pretty much defecting," replied an equally dumbfounded fellow Shocktrooper.

Alice, meanwhile, was at a loss of words. Throughout all the times she's fought the Covenant, she had never seen them do such a thing beforehand. They were always shoot first, talk never. These new guys on the block, these... Mandalorians surely were full of surprises.

Then Daisy chuckled as she picked up her helmet and turned to her sister Spartan, "I'd almost forgotten that it's been twenty-one years since you disappeared," Daisy put her helmet back on with a snap and a hiss as it reconnected to her armor, "The Sanghelli have been much more talkative than they have ever been, especially among the veterans."

"Does this happen often?" Alice inquired.

"Sometimes yes," Daisy confirmed and then added, "Even Squad Leader has been challenged to such duels and John was almost killed when one of the Sanghelli aboard ship named Thel'Lodamee defeated when he was rescuing Doctor Halsey back in 2544."

Alice was put on edge at both John-117's near death and that something had happened to Dr. Catherine Elizabeth Halsey. The fact that an Elite was on board the Purity of Faith and could fight the unofficial leader of all Spartans on better terms was not something she was happy with. She knew from now on, to be extra careful, but still she asked.

"How about you 023?"

"No, I've been in semi-retirement for years now," Daisy indicated her appearance, she did look a bit too young to Alice, plus her hair was non-regulation in length and seemed slightly out of shape, though most would not have noticed had they not been a Spartan, "It's a long story, but it's suffice to say that Lord Hood and the President himself know of Winterfall, since they both ordered it."

Ryu had listened in to the two Spartans discussion, before it had switched to radio only. He had the impression this war had been going on for a long. The mention that it had been 21 years was disconcerting, but he would get more information once the battle was over.

Then he turned to the group as a whole, "Well, what are you standing around for?" he demanded as he picked up his helmet, putting it back on, "Let's go and take the bridge!"

The resounding cheer of UNSC and Mando'a troopers snapped the few still dumb stuck out of their funk and they joined in, and then all together they continued onward towards the bridge of the \_Purity of Faith\_.

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\_\*\*That same time\*\*\_

\*\*\_Bridge of the \_Quiet  
Redeemer\*\*

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Thel'Lodamee walked up to a holo image of the battle. Three ships had suddenly turned their guns on their fellow ships and then more followed. In the end, nine ships had defected to the other side and Thel knew the battle was over.

"Shipmaster we have lost, let us leave this battle," Thel winced in

pain, a blaster bolt had nearly taken his head off, but he had dodged that, but a human female Marine had slid along the deck plating back on the Purity of Faith and shot him in the leg with a M90 Shotgun.

The woman had escaped when a red and black colored Spartan female had nearly turned his head into a smear on the bulkhead wall. Knowing better than to push his luck for the day, he had retreated, something he was growing weary off. The next time he would be the one advancing, but today was yet another blunder thanks to a commander who was too proud to realize the danger.

A mental sigh Thel listed the \_Purity of Faith\_ as the six ship since human year 2544 that he had been forced to abandon since that one debacle. He ideally began to wonder if he would survive the war the most retreats and abandoned ships in his record. He simply loathed the thought.

"Agreed," the Shipmaster sighed, inadvertently taking Thel'Lodamee out of his thoughts, and believing this was because of the fact that they had allowed Brutes into their fleet and thus had become cursed by it.

The only saving grace was that these Brutes were the ones trying to break their savage nature under control, but regrettably, they weren't all of that one group

"Navigation plot an exit course and jump vector," the Shipmaster ordered, subdued, "Helm take us out of here."

The big ship shifted under their feet as dampners and AG kicked in. Soon the Quiet Redeemer was joined by other ships and the whole group simply plotted a course out of the battle zone. The Third Battle of Harvest was not quite over, plenty of ships remained to fight, more than 30 to be precise, but for a number it was over.

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\*\*\_Meanwhile, on the Bridge of the \_Purity of Faith\*\*

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Rto'Rakee saw the exchange on the ships monitors, and to say he was pissed was an understatement. He was downright furious!

\_'You will pay for this betrayal Neos! I swear I will have your head on a pike and then I will butcher your family down to the last child! I SWEAR IT!' \_Rto thought furiously in his mind, even as he saw the ships retreating, about six ships, he also saw that the two ships he had kept in hidden reserve were losing to the largest UNSC ship that was now getting reinforcements.

However, this was not the thoughts that were shared by the rest of the bridge crew who were watching. Naza had a point, this war started because the Prophets deemed the Humans as Unclean, and must be eliminated for the greater good of the Great Journey.

However... none of them have ever dared question why. Why had the

Prophets declared Humanity as enemies, when they have never done anything to the Covenant. And added to the fact they have survived against their empire for over 20 years is proof of how strong humanity truly are, regardless of how primitive their technology was.

As they looked at their Shipmaster, they could easily tell he was going off the deep end. A couple sighed, Rto was from a once proud and honourable warrior clan back on Sanghelios, then the Prophets' declaration came and his clan were one of the few who refused to partake in a act of genocide. Hoping to retake favor with the Prophets, Rto killed any love he had for his clan, including his own wife and children, and slaughtered them all. This action shocked the people of Sanghelios to its core... and the Prophets awarded him greatly.

But he also received spite from all the other warrior clans of Sanghelios, and wanted nothing to do with him, but pledged their loyalty to the Prophets, nonetheless. Yet, after this display Rtos was showing, added to how strong these 'Mandalorians' were and the fact that the UNSC was growing surprisingly stronger, they were all beginning to seriously question their faith to their Fleetmaster, and maybe even the Prophets themselves.

Then, there was a loud banging against the hatch that lead to the bridge. The bridge crew turned around and the banging got a bit louder...

Then, the hatches were blasted open, and in came The Mand'alor along with his squads of troops, the UNSC Humans, and the Spartans with rushed in. Several Brutes had been by the first hatch that had been breached. They tried to fight back, but then a second hatch was breached and the Elites next to that one were killed or wounded as well and the Brutes just couldn't stop the invasion of the bridge as a third, then fourth, and at last, the final hatch were all breached.

"We meet again, \_Fleetmaster\_," Ryu sneered as he activated his lightsabers. "And this time, I \_will \_be removing that stick out of your ass, violently so."

With his piece said Ryu leapt forward with a Force powered leap landing in front of Rtos who was in the middle of drawing his Energy Blade and managed to block Ryu's Lightsaber in the nick of time as the rest of the bridge erupted in a massive firefight around them.

Ryu swung his second saber low aiming for Rtos' legs only for the Elite to leap back out of the way getting a Force Push for his efforts sending him flying back into a series of consoles crashing into them with a very loud 'Thud' that would have broken a lesser man, or alien.

Growling the Fleetmaster leapt to his feet and bellowed out a challenge charging the Mandalore "How cowardly using those tricks!" Rtos growled as the pair clashed their weapons Ryu being the clearly superior swordsman.

Ryu let out a low chuckle as he used the Force to yank Rtos' feet out from underneath him and swung at the Elite's neck only for him to

roll out of the way "Those 'cowardly tricks' as you call them are just another tool for me to use to grab victory," He stated smirking widely behind his helmet, "As a figure from Galactic history, Jedi Master Revan â€" one of the greatest military minds ever conceived â€" once said 'Honor is for the Dead.'"

Rtos growled as he rolled to his feet beginning to feel the strain in his muscles from holding back the powerful blows the human rained down upon him with unerring speed. Bellowing out once again he charged earning an inaudible sigh from Ryu who quickly stepped to the side and brought his saber down on the wrist holding the Energy Blade severing Rtos' hand from his arm making the Elite cry out in pain as he collapsed to his knees clutching the stub where his hand once was.

He stiffened as he heard the distinctive hum of the lightsaber on either side of his head signifying the end of the fight "It's so easy to end a life isn't it?" Ryu asked his voice quiet so that only the two of them would hear "I personally find it far too easy to resort to killing as an option when dealing with situations like this, but as both a Jedi and Mandalore," the sabers deactivated "You are now prisoners of the Mandalorians, if you continue to resist, you will die, co-operate and we will treat you fairly as worthy warriors."

Rtos was seeing nothing but a crimson red. He would not be defeated by a mere \_Human! \_Glancing to his left, he noticed that one of the other Humans, a Spartan was approaching Ryu from behind. The rest of the bridge crew was either dead, or surrendered.

'\_If I am going down... I will kill this human to go down with me!\_' he thought as he surprised Ryu and activated the wrist-mounted Energy Knife, and charged forward. However, Ryu was about to draw one of his own swords to simply slice Rtos's head off, but was caught by surprise as he was suddenly pushed to the side by Alice, and she took the hit.

"Fuck!" One of the ODS'T's shouted as Alice slumped to the ground, but before any of the others could think about shooting the Fleetmaster, Rtos suddenly stiffened as his eyes widened in pained shock. The boarders and the surviving bridge crew looked on in surprise as they saw the unmistakable of a Energy sword protruding out of the Shipmaster's chest.

"W-what is this?" the Sangheili rasped out and then turned his head just as a shimmer was seen as a stealth field deactivated, revealing the commander of the SpecOps himself, along with two of his Elites, "\_Y-You\_...!" he questioned in anger.

"Yes. Me," Neos sneered. "Rtos Rakae, you have dishonored yourself for the last time. For over twenty years I served under you, tolerating your arrogance...b ut I shall not stand your blind faith to the Prophets nor your worst crimes of dishonor any longer... may you burn in the hells, \_Shipmaster.\_"

And with one quick motion, Neos drew his other sword, and sliced the Shipmaster's head clean off.

After this was done, Ryu and Scout managed, if barely, to flip the Spartan onto her back "She's alive, but we need to get her Medical

Attention ASAP," Ryu stated with urgency, "We should get her to the \_Redemption's\_ Bacta Tanks."

Scout nodded as She and Ryu lifted her up, but barely managed too since her armor was so heavy, even with some Marines helping her out.

However, Daisy and another Spartan quickly took their wounded sibling and applied Bio-Foam to the wound. Then they were caught by surprise when an elite walked towards them, and attached a Sterile Field Generator to Alice's back. His armor showed that he was one of the SpecOps Elites.

"I'll help her get to your transports faster," the Elite said and then turned, "If that is alright with you, \_Mand'alor.\_"

Ryu looked at Neos, who nodded. "Right, show us the way," he responded, "Matthew, Jordan, you come along as well. Calista, you're in charge until I get back."

"Right," Calista said as Ryu and Scout left with the Elite leading the way to get Alice back to the transports faster, with Jordan and Matthew following them.

Neos then stepped towards the Consoles of the bridge, and pressed a button "Attention to all Forces aboard the \_Purity of Faith,\_" he said. "This is Special Operations Commander Neos 'Tumae. Shipmaster Rtos Rakae has been killed. All Crew are ordered to surrender to the Mandalorian and UNSC Forces boarding our ship. If you resist... you will die and the battle is already lost," with that, he cut the transmission and turned to Ryu, "Lead the way, Mand'alor," he said and Ryu nodded before they left the bridge.

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\_\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\_

\_\*\*Back on the Surface of Harvest\*\*\_

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A Minor Brute howled in agony as Serra drove one of her lightsabers into the Covenant soldier's back then yanked it out, causing him to fall face first. "Move up!" she shouted to the Clones and Marines she and Jerome lead as they attacked the Covenant Base.

It turned out Kirkwood was correct, and they found a way to flank the Covenant from behind using the passage. They managed to attack the base the Covenant had set up and were now well on their way towards the Grav lift where the Cruiser was deploying its troops to the surface. Especially after what appeared to be a mutiny had broken out between the Covenant soldiers.

A pair of Brute Minors with a squad of Grunts charged towards them, but the Clone Troopers and Marines opened fire with their respective rifles and mowed the grunts down while Jerome took out the Brutes, a shotgun to the face of one, while bashing the other one's head in.

"We're almost there!" Jerome shouted as the group approached the Grav lift as Elites and Brutes with green shoulder pauldrons exchanged fire with Covenant soldiers with normal pauldrons. The covering fire allowed them to approach where a mixed group of Jackals and Grunts were supposed to be guarding the Grav Lift, were now shooting at one another with the out-numbered Jackals being pushed back.

"Now we free!" shouted one Grunt, "So suck on this!" and he tossed a plasma grenade that stuck to the face of the leading Jackal, who promptly panicked, and then blew up with some of his men.

Just then, Covenant Loyalists came down and the mutinying Grunts quickly abandoned their positions to take cover. The group included mostly just another bunch of Grunts and Jackals, but also three Brute Majors, a Brute Chieftain, and a pair of Hunters. Though one of the Grunts got lucky with sticking a grenade to the Chieftain's face.

"I got one?" the Grunt shouted in surprise and immediately began dancing to avoid vengeful fire from the Brute Majors, but they were soon down, sniped by Jackals who were part of the mutiny.

The pair of Hunters then moved out and instead of fighting the mutineers and allied forces, they promptly engaged several Brute Prowlers belonging to Loyalist forces. This allowed the allies to approach the Grav Lift without the vehicles trying to run them over or gun them down. Though it still left the Loyalist Jackals and Grunts to be fought, that was easy compared to the Prowlers.

Serra activated her other lightsaber and crossed them in front of her, while Jerome reloaded his shotgun.

"Time to clean house," Jerome said as he jumped forward, firing his weapon killing two Grunts and a Jackal in the first shot while Serra deflected the plasma shot at her right back at them, killing a few more Grunts and a few Jackals who didn't raise their shields in time.

When they were taken care of, the team of UNSC and Mando'ade forces looked up at the Grav Lift as Jerome picked up the Nuke, and pressed in the command to set the timer and activate the bomb, "I'll set this thing to blow in 300 seconds with a 120 second delay," he said, "Now let's just get it up there."

"I can handle that," Serra said as she took the Nuke. She then looked up at the opening, and she tossed it towards the ship with all of her might, and using the Force to guide the nuclear device into the belly of the ship as it successfully entered and landed inside.

The Marines were left gawking and Jerome only seemed to be surprised that the woman had managed to throw like that, as she turned toward them and raised an eyebrow.

"What?" she said and one of the Clones spoke up.

"Uhh, I think this is their first time seeing a Jedi use the Force to lift a bomb into a ship, Ma'am," he said, and Serra blinked and sighed.

"Alright, if you're done gawking... Let's get out of here!" she yelled the last part, and the UNSC soldiers jumped a bit, but nodded

as they hauled their asses out of there, and back to their vehicles.

A few minutes later they reached their vehicles, and not a moment too soon as the Nuke detonated, the shields of the Covenant Warship flared as it took the EMP effect and the ship exploded.

"Come on! Let's go!" Serra shouted as she hopped onto her speeder, and she and the others bolted out of there as the exploding Cruiser fell to the surface.

"Holy SHIT!" shouted one Marine as explosions were ripping out of the Cruiser as it fell.

"No kidding!" shouted another just as the cruiser slammed to the ground.

"Celebrate later!" One of the Clones shouted as their Vehicles moved back towards the base.

"This isn't over yet! We need to take out the ones that are still attacking the base!"

The Marines and the others nodded in agreement, and they made their way back to the base where the others were holding off the Covenant attack.

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\_\*\*Meanwhile\*\*\_

\_\*\*At Alpha base\*\*\_

\_\*\*0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0\*\*\_

A Elite Minor fell to the ground after being shot in the head by a Clone's Sniper rifle, as the Covenant Army assaulted the Base in order to wipe out the mixed Mando'ade and UNSC Forces.

"Dammit!" one Clone shouted, " They just keep coming! Don't they ever just give up?"

"Fat chance of that!" a Marine shouted as he fired his own Sniper Rifle killing a few Jackals.

"These guys don't care how many of them get killed! They just wait for us to run out of ammo to finish us off!"

"Well that ain't happening today!" Zack said as he fired his own rifle, a Cobra several meters behind him firing as well before a beam from a Covenant Locust tore into it, destroying it as the crew bailed out and rolled to put out their flaming uniforms.

Zack cursed as a Walker quickly followed the Cobra to the scrap heap. The driver had no doubt been killed, the crew was bailing out, but the Gunner for the Mass Driver was still firing as Walker brewed up and exploded, killing the man instantly. Zack popped back up to continue firing as Grizzly MBT pulled up and fired it's God's Shotgun right into the enemy ranks.

Zack was glad for the mighty tank as it reloaded and fired again, this time taking out a Locust. Then Falcon Strike Fighters shot overhead, dropping a load of dumb bombs as they shot off to look for enemy fighters. They found a Covenant Air Artillery instead and blasted the purple flying plasma mortar armed gunship out of the sky.

The Hornets, Sparrowhawks, and Falcon tilt rotors were engaged with Covenant Banshees and Vampires. The Skyhawks were engaged in Wild Weasel missions as the Longswords chased enemy fighters at higher altitudes. At the same time, the Shortswords were pulling their weight in overtime as they bombed and strafed Covenant positions and advancing lines.

Both sides artillery were dueling away as well as attacking opposite positions. The destruction was punctuated by calls for support, ammo, fire missions, and medics. The battle had really intensified and seemed to be swinging into its conclusion at this rate.

Dropping back down to reload again, Zack popped back up to fire. He was getting some good kills in as he dropped back down and happened to glance to his left to see a bunch of Spartans in Grenadier MJOLNIR armor standing strong and firing their heavy machine guns into the Covenant ranks as he finished reloading and popped back up to fire again. However he stopped firing and looked ahead, and grinned from under his helmet.

"LOOK!" he shouted, pointing ahead.

The others looked, and from behind the enemy lines came Serra Keto, Jerome, and their forces came down the hill firing at the Covenant Forces.

While high in the sky, UNSC warships could now finally advance. The Covenant's heavy anti-air platforms had been destroyed or knocked out. Plus, with the loss of the Battlecruiser, they could safely advance forward and provide uninterrupted fire support.

The Third Battle of Harvest was far from over, but at least things were beginning to improve.

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\*\*\_Meanwhile  
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\*\*\_On the \_Redemption  
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"Captain, the enemy forces in space are falling apart." said one of the bridge crew onboard the \_Redemption.\_ "Also, reports are coming in that several Covenant Ships are experiencing ship-wide mutinies and are defecting to our side. Mand'alor has reported that the Assault Carrier has been nearly completely captured, and the CCS-Class Battlecruiser has already been captured. Our ground forces also report that, thanks with the UNSC's support, are pushing back the Covenant."

The acting captain of the Redemption while Ryu was away nodded "good, order our forces to press the attack, and to keep their eyes open for the defecting covenant ships." He said. "Tell them to avoid friendly fire."

"Sir, I'm detecting a Hyperspace reading!" Someone else on the bridge said. "I'm picking up the IFF's of the Hades Corps!"

The man smiled at that, "Good, inform Mand'alor that reinforcements have arrive! And get in contact with the Inferno at once!" he ordered and the man at the communications console nodded.

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\*\*Onboard the Inferno\*\*

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On the bridge of the \_Imperator-\_class Star Destroyer \_Inferno,\_ a woman who looked to be in her mid 30's with shoulder length dark brown hair and emerald green eyes, wearing what looked to be a hybrid between Jedi Robes and Clone ARC Trooper armor. Jade Lee watched as the \_Inferno \_and the other 21 vessels in her fleet dropped out of hyperspace.

"General, we've successfully dropped out of Hyperspace." Said another woman, who looked as old as Jade was, with sandy blond hair tied in a high pony-tail and amber colored eyes wearing a custom crimson red old Republic Navy Uniform. "And sensors report one hell of a battle breaking out on the surface and in space."

Jade didn't need to be told as she could see the battle going outside.

"I can see that Satele," she then turned to a Clone wearing Custom ARC Trooper Armor that was colored black with Red Trimming, his helmet was off, revealing his face which looked much like a clone, only with lighter tanned skin, and his eyes and hair were of a lighter shade as well.

"Trips, get the ground forces ready," Jade said. "We need to secure the planet below of these 'Covenant' guys. Satele, I want you to order all ships to get into formation with Mand'alor's fleet and finish off the enemy fleet overhead. I'll be launching in my fighter to give support as well."

CC-0666, also known as Trips nodded as did Satele "Understood," he said, as he grinned "Let's show these bastards what the 247th Hades Mobile Assault Corps can do."

Jade returned the grin "That we will Trips." She said as she turned to Satele, who nodded as the two left the bridge. "You just be careful down there, we don't know all that much about these guys yet, so be prepared for anything, and please be safe."

Trips just chuckled a bit "I'll be sure to do that," he said "But you be careful too \_Cyar'ika,\_ we still have to...celebrate our victory we had at Fressia."

Jade blushed an interesting shade of red, causing Trips to laugh as the two hurried down the halls of the \_Inferno \_to their destinations.

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\*\*UNSC Spirit of Fire  
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Captain James Gregory Cutter, for the four time in his military career in the UNSC, was dumbfounded. The first being when the existance of the Covenant was made public over 20 years ago, the second when they came across the Shield World, and the third being the very discovery of the Mando'ade.

Now, he and the rest of the bridge crew of the \_Spirit \_as well as even Serena watched in amazment and awe as the join UNSC-Mando'ade fleet pummeled the Covenant Fleet ahead of them. Only a handful of their own vessels had been heavily damaged, while the Covenant Fleet was taking much more heavier losses. Over half of their entire system fleet had been destroyed, two of their ships, including their flagship, were captured, and several of their ships were also experiencing Mutinies and defection to the Mando'ade and UNSC, and joining their fleet.

As reports from the ground battle arrived, they were having a similar story as they had destroyed the Covenant Vessels Planet-Side, and were pushing the Covenant back to their base. Reports of surrendering and defecting Covenant were also seen as well.

He then felt a feeling he never thought he would, when this whole war started...The sweet taste of victory.

He smiled forlornly as he thought, \_'Well, looks like humanity is getting a second chance,'\_

"Captain," Serena said, "The \_Redemption\_ has contacted us, saying a fleet of their reinforcements have just arrived in the system, and I confirm 21 warships of similar design to their own have just jumped into the system, and are launching Fighters, Bombers and Dropships."

The Captain nodded "Good," he said as he stood up from his chair, and looked at the battle ahead "Let's finish this battle up Serena." He said as a slight grin formed on his face "Its time we kicked the Covenant off of Harvest...once and for all."

Serena grinned as well, along with the rest of the bridge crew of the \_Spirit of fire.\_ "Aye aye, Captain!" She said, a bit enthusiastically as her hologram disappeared.

With the combined forces of Winterfall, Mand'alor's fleet, the \_Spirit of Fire, \_The Hades Corps and the Covenant Defectors, in just one and a half hours, the remaining loyalist covenant forces had either been destroyed or forced to surrender, and their ground bases were all captured. In the end, the Third Battle of Harvest would soon become the Covenant's first Major Defeat at the hands of Humans, and

a major victory for the UNSC and Mando'ade.

At the battle's end, celebration among the UNSC Forces broke out as they all cheered both in space and on the planet surface, as they tasted true victory for the first time. Even the Mando'ade allowed themselves a cheer for defeating this new enemy.

However, both of them knew that this was only the beginning, that there would be more battles to fight after this one. But they also knew that it didn't matter how many battles they had to fight, as long as the Covenant fought against Humanity, the UNSC and their new allies in the Mando'ade, will fight them, and win.

**\*\*Authors Note: HAHAAHAHAHA! I'M BACK B\*\*\*\*\*S! I told Ya'll I wasn't abandoning this fic after seeing how popular it is! \*\*\_**

**\_\*\*First off, VERY Special thanks to F-14 Tomcat Lover, he was a HUGE help in the last few weeks in improving this chapter. Without him, this chapter would have taken a while longer to finish. So go visit his channel, and check out his fics! And don't forget to check out Patriot-112 and Dragonknightryu's channels as well since they helped out a lot as well.**

**><strong>\_**

**\_\*\*So please leave reviews, favorite and add this story to your alerts if you haven't already!**

**><strong>\_**

**\_\*\*I'll try my best to make sure the next chapter is completed more quickly than this one took, so until next time, MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU!**

**><strong>\_**

### 3. Fanfic Black Out

XXx

Attention,

As you know, there is a scheme brewing up with the FF staff and they're planning to take down any and every story over the M rated section (stories with yaoi, yuri, het lemons, song based stories, extreme violence, etc) ...

So on June 23rd, there will be an official Black Out. Authors will not log in, read, or review stories. Those who do not have accounts are also affected by FF's decisions too. Please participate and spread the news! If enough authors take part in this event, FF will know we mean business. Also, if anybody has any information on when this purging on M-rated fics will be please contact me. I would like to know in advance.

SPREAD THE WORD!

copy and paste this into your story updates, communities and forums, and message fellow authors. Thank you.

End

file.